

# THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

Chaplain Harry P. Abbott



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**CHAPLAIN (MAJOR) HARRY P. ABBOTT**  
**United States Army**



**THE NAZI  
"88"  
MADE BELIEVERS**

**by  
CHAPLAIN H. P. ABBOTT  
Major in United States Army**



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**H. P. Abbott and L. L. Huffman**

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THIS BOOK  
IS  
DEDICATED TO THE MEMBERS  
Both Living and Dead  
OF  
COMBAT COMMAND "B"  
First Armored Division  
AND  
THE CHAPLAINS OF  
THE UNITED STATES ARMY



## *Foreword*

THE REALLY great armies have always been imbued with a deep faith in the rightness of their causes. A mercenary army or one lacking belief in its cause has frequently attained a high degree of professional skill and won important successes only to fail in the end. In such armies honor, *esprit-de-corps*, awards, and pay have been substituted for personal and individual interest in the preservation and prosperity of a free government of free men. The preparation for battle in a country of free men, such as the United States, is, therefore, not alone physical or material but spiritual as well.

For Americans the principles set forth in the Declaration of Independence, and in the Bill of Rights to the Constitution have furnished the inspirational guide whenever the country has been threatened, and will continue to do so as long as these principles are practiced among us; but the American, like any other good soldier, needs a higher faith to sustain him in battle—faith in the God of his fathers, however understood.

Chaplain Abbott, by his untiring effort in the United States, during the movements overseas, in the United Kingdom, and in French North Africa, not only rekindled an interest in spiritual matters in the Thirteenth Armored Regiment but painstakingly maintained and strengthened it. In the landing at Oran and in all subsequent operations in Tunisia, he performed the additional duties of Senior Chaplain, Combat Command "B",

First Armored Division and besides performed the duties of Graves Registration Officer for most of the period. He worked tirelessly with all his energy for the spiritual and physical welfare of all ranks, succored those in distress, and attended to their many needs, and gathered-up the fallen, giving them appropriate farewell in temporary cemeteries frequently of his own selection. Finally, at the end of the campaign, he reported to the hospital seriously ill and was evacuated to the United States. In the performance of his many duties, he was faithfully assisted by Chaplain Carper and Chaplain Doyle. To these three, the men of "C/C B" will always owe a debt of gratitude.

In presenting his story, Chaplain Abbott has made available to future historians another bit of source material and, at the same time, to Chaplains of the future a guide that should prove useful to them in the performance of their duties. The parents of all soldiers should find an interest in it.

P. M. ROBINETT  
Brigadier General, U.S.A.

## *Introduction*

"THE Nazi '88' Made Believers" is written in order to preserve, at least, a semblance of the picture of some of the hardships, hell, humor, and courage displayed by our American soldiers; to give the folks at home the assurance that the religious welfare of their loved ones is not neglected in the United States Army, and to reveal interesting personal experiences of the author in connection with the spiritual welfare of these men.

Men overseas, those who have had a taste of the "real thing," do not need to be persuaded to attend church. Even on the front line men demand the privilege of divine services, and many high ranking officers of the Army realize that, through this source, men are fortified to face the enemy and sometimes death with a smile on their faces, and without such fortification they might fail.

The Master said: "Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends." Men who have never professed religion before in their lives have done so on the eve of, or following, battle engagements. Men who never prayed before in their lives, do not hesitate to admit that they prayed and found no difficulty in doing so when facing the realities of warfare. They have indicated their intention of living better lives upon return home and of taking an active part in civic interests, including the church.

Sometimes it took the German dreaded "88's" to bring about this transformation, as I will attempt to show in the pages of this book.

I am grateful to Mrs. Virginia Fancher of Little Rock, Arkansas for the letter concerning her husband which was published in the Arkansas Gazette, for the interview with the mother of the pilot, whose home was in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to the Religious Telescope, Dayton, Ohio, and to Mrs. J. H. Martin, Fairfield, California, for permission to use material furnished by them, and to all those who assisted me in connection with this book.

The Author

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**BATTLE ENGAGEMENTS**  
*of the*  
**THIRTEENTH ARMORED REGIMENT,**  
**FIRST ARMORED DIVISION**

Oran.....	8 November, 1942 to 10 November, 1942
Tebourba.....	29 November, 1942 to 4 December, 1942
Medjez el Bab.....	4 December, 1942 to 6 January, 1943
Siliana-Piehon....	24 December, 1942 to 29 December, 1942
Ousseltia Valley.....	19 January, 1943 to 26 January, 1943
First Sened Station.....	24 January, 1943
Second Sened Station.....	27 January, 1943
Mazilla Pass.....	29 January, 1943 to 3 February, 1943
Sbeitla.....	16 February, 1943 to 17 February, 1943
Kasserine Pass.....	20 February, 1943 to 25 February, 1943
Maknassy.....	22 March, 1943 to 9 April, 1943
El Guetar.....	20 March, 1943 to 30 March, 1943, 8 April, 1943
Mouse Trap.....	21-27 April, 1943 to 3-4 May, 1943
Mateur.....	5 May, 1943 to 6 May, 1943
Final Operation and Pusuit to the Sea.....	7-9 May, 1943

**VICTORY**  
**IN**  
**NORTH AFRICA**

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## *Chapter One*

### *Birth of the First Armored Division*

THE First Armored Division was born at Fort Knox, Kentucky, under the command of Major General Bruce Magruder, and was a product of the mind of the late Major General Adna Chaffee who was in command of the First Armored Corps. Later, General Magruder was relieved by Major General Orlando Ward. Combat Command "B" of the First Armored Division was commanded by Brigadier General Lunsford Oliver who was later promoted to Major General. Brigadier General P. M. Robinett, who was formerly in command of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment, succeeded him. The author served three years as the Regimental Chaplain and, in addition, served overseas as Chaplain for Combat Command "B". This regiment gave the United States Army several of its military leaders, including Major General Charles L. Scott, Major General Jack W. Heard, Brigadier General Raymond E. McQuillin, Brigadier General Paul M. Robinett, and Colonel Clarence C. Benson.

In the fall of 1941 the largest maneuvers ever held were participated in by the First Armored Division. There is no question but that this intensive field training proved very valuable. During this three month period we underwent all the test of real warfare except that of being under actual fire. Atabrine for the prevention of ma-

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laria was added to our diet, and "C" rations were the vitamins. All had a taste of real field duty, including blackout driving, crossing pontoon bridges under cover of darkness, camouflaging, etc. In connection with these maneuvers, we visited some fifteen states and each state seemed to outdo itself in extending its hospitality; and as we passed on to another, the men would remark that the people were swell in the last state they visited. There was no exception. This added much to the high morale of the men, who were, after three months, eager to return to their home camp and loved ones.

We returned December 6; then on December 7 came "Pearl Harbor" and WAR WAS DECLARED!

Intensive training became the order of the day, and we were placed on "Alert" or "Semi-alert" status. Soon we were on our way to Fort Dix, New Jersey, where increased training, schools, drills, and "brushing-up" prepared us for what was ahead. We knew we would soon be on the high seas bound for somewhere. Loved ones came—mothers, wives, and sweethearts—to have a few precious last moments with their soldiers. The air was tense! One could feel it. In such an atmosphere, we held a party, our last in the United States. Among those who co-operated to make this a huge success were Mrs. J. Winfield Scott, The Gray Ladies, and Mrs. Elsie McDonald, who secured unusual talent for us through her dance studio, as well as many others, all from Philadelphia. With the Thirteenth Armored Regiment's

## BIRTH OF THE FIRST ARMORED DIVISION

band, which has always been a topnotcher (formerly with the Sixth Armored Infantry), the best show we ever held was produced, including a dance for those who wished to participate.

On Mothers' Day, May 10, 1942, an unusual service was held, and the church was filled to its capacity. On the Saturday night preceding, the Chaplain had performed his last wedding (that soldier became a prisoner of war, having been captured in the early phases of the war in North Africa at Medjez El Bab).

Following the Mothers' Day service, we were given our "marching orders." Some last good-byes, and we were on our way overseas. We knew not where; we only knew we had a job to do, and it was our duty to do it. We boarded that beautiful and majestic liner, Queen Mary, and sailed for that unknown port. Many of us saluted "the Lady of Liberty", and watched her until she was out of sight, all hoping that some day victory would be ours and we would get another glimpse of her.

The sea trip was uneventful except for the tenseness aboard, boat drills, organizations effected, and being on the alert at all times. At times the sea was rough; but this majestic liner, which seemed like a floating "palace", plowed through. Of course, many of us were seasick. Church services were held and most men took advantage of them—Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish.

After making this trip through submarine-in-

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fested waters, we finally arrived at our destination in northern Ireland. Oh, it was good to get one's feet on the ground again after days on the water! Just before landing I was confined to my bunk with a good case of seasickness. A meeting was announced for the staff. I did not attend, but I had one of the most disheartening shocks of my life when Major Francis G. Huffard, Special Services Officer, said, upon returning, "Chaplain, it's a shame they're breaking up the outfit." I asked, "What do you mean?", and he said in fun (fun to him, not to me), "Part of us are getting off in Ireland; the rest of you are going on to Africa." Africa, of all places, was one place I did not care to go. I had been asked to consider going to Africa as a missionary once, but I had replied, "I don't feel called to Africa." Perhaps I was like Jonah when he was told to go to Nineveh. For awhile it looked as if the Major was right and that was what was going to take place. Some of us were put on another ship, while the others remained on the Queen Mary and went on ahead to Ireland, where in three days we joined them, much to my pleasure.

We were happy to be on land, any land. At first we were not impressed with Ireland, but soon we began to like it. We were stationed near the Mourne Mountains, and the scenery was beautiful. We had difficulty sleeping at nights at first, for there was only about one hour of darkness in twenty-four. Some of us attempted to stay up until it got dark, but we finally had to learn to

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pull the shades down and make our own nights by blackout methods.

Everyone's life was a busy one here and the chaplain's was no exception; sending cables, money orders for the men, giving lectures, holding services, having interviews with the men, visiting hospitals, burying the dead, attending conferences, schools, and pinch-hitting here and there filled many of the hours. In the last war the author, as a Boy Scout, sold Liberty Bonds at Rockford, Illinois. In Ireland the author helped to sell Defense Bonds. Nearly all the men in the army bought these bonds voluntarily. They had faith in America's future and were willing to invest in it as well as fight for it. These men were young and eager. One tanker said to me, "Chaplain, I'm getting tired of this training. I could whip the whole German army with my tank." I replied, "Be patient, you will get at them soon enough." Later, when the German 88's stopped some of their tanks, they became more serious and less carefree. (Understand, their courage was undimmed.) Some of the men had their tanks shot out from under them, and in the new ones they were determined that the enemy would pay dearly.

We were equipped with a little "peep", the praises of which cannot be sung too high. The "peeps" were quick and powerful, dependable, economical in fuel, and fairly comfortable. Each chaplain with a combat unit was authorized one of these "peeps", with a quarter-ton trailer, which

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made a good combination, and enabled the chaplain to perform his duties in a capable manner.

Ireland was beautiful with its many flowers and beautiful colleens; but, for the most part, there still was "no place like home." First, there was a job to do; the men were eager to do it. The Chaplain had many interviews with his men; some wanted to marry, some were homesick, a few had gotten into trouble, and others were impatient. Entertainment was provided by dances, movies, and U.S.O.'s, all of which helped. Such stars as Al Jolson, Miss Lupino, Merle Oberon, Jimmy Durante, and a host of others brought cheer and gladness to many hearts; but mostly they were welcomed as AMERICANS, ambassadors from home, America.

This restlessness was prevalent not only among the enlisted men, but among the officers too. They wanted action! One officer, forgetting himself, over-indulged and wrecked his vehicle. He was engaged to be married to a fine girl. He was confined and faced dismissal. I visited him, and he pleaded and begged for another chance, saying, "Chaplain, if the Colonel will give me another chance I'll make good." He kept that promise and later won many decorations for his valor and attention to duty. Many times, officers, as well as the enlisted men, appreciate the services of a chaplain, who often intercede in their behalf, as this instance illustrates.

Another time the chaplain came in handy when my driver and I were leaving Belfast, where we



**Major General Bruce Magruder**



**Major General Adna Chaffee**



**Major General Orlando Ward**



**Lt. General Jacob L. Devers, left, and Major General Lunsford Oliver**



**Major General M. Harmon**



**Brigadier General P. M. Robinett**



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had gone on "Official Business", when I noticed a soldier and two young ladies in conversation on the left side of the road. We were driving on the left, as everyone does in Ireland. A car was approaching us. The streets were wet and it looked, when this car rounded the bend, as though it was heading toward these young people. I expressed my feeling to my driver, Corporal Henry Whipple, and no sooner were the words out of my mouth than it happened. The impact flung the soldier and the girls into the air. By that time we had reached the scene. I jumped out and, noting that the soldier was the only one seriously injured and that the others were looking after the ladies, I tried stopping the flow of blood. As this was impossible, I loaded the soldier in a truck, and held him until we reached a British hospital where emergency aid was administered before his transfer to the American hospital in Belfast. He received a fractured skull and had lost much blood, but he is living today. To the chaplain, it was just another good deed was done for the day.

Many times a chaplain brings the pay to the men in the hospital; brings stamps, V-mail, clothing; writes letters for them; makes purchases; arranges for watch repairs and mails packages, etc. There is no end to the many demands made upon a chaplain. He has no time to loaf if he is on the job. I saw none that were not busy with their duties.

The king and queen of England visited our camp. It had been a beehive of excitement for this great

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occasion. Guards of honor, parades, demonstrations, and inspections were the order of the day. Their Majesties won their way into the hearts of every one present. Of course, the high light of the day was the luncheon, which the king and queen attended, held in the enlisted men's mess hall in the presence of several of the men. I was honored by being selected for the invocation. Some of the higher ranking officers were a bit worried that this might be too long, but I assured them it would be brief. It was a thrill for all present to see the distinguished guests. Our own Ambassador Winant was there, and numerous government officials, both American and British. Appropriate music was furnished by the Thirteenth Armored Regiment Band. Suddenly it broke out with "The Old Gray Mare Ain't What She Used to Be." I was mortified. I thought it was a mistake, but later I learned that since the Thirteenth Armored Regiment was an old cavalry regiment, the king had requested that number, he being an old cavalryman in his own right. He was genuinely pleased and the gracious smile of the beautiful queen reassured me that everything was all right. Major General Hartle, Major General Orlando Ward and, at that time, Colonel Robinett were present and saw to it that our distinguished visitors were entertained in the royal manner in which Americans can do such things.

Shortly after, some of the men broadcasted to America a short program, which some of the readers of this book no doubt heard, concerning the

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tanks and their activities. Visits were afforded to various places in Ireland, including the resorts and places of historic interest, such as St. Patrick's Cathedral. Here the Chaplain gave lectures, and the men visited St. Patrick's grave. We also visited the ruins of Belfast, made so by the Germans when that city was defenseless from the air. Many beautiful cathedrals and homes had been destroyed. Surely the Germans must suffer the retribution of God for such destruction upon the innocent and helpless!

Suddenly, there was increased activity, long marches, water-proofing of vehicles, atmosphere tense, and leaves cancelled (a few had been granted to visit London). Instructors visited us and there were more lectures and more schools. Something was up. We were alerted. This is where Combat Command "B" really came into the picture in a big way. Soon we were in England. England with its dark nights, with its fog, and where people were a little different, it seemed, and more difficult to get acquainted with, but seemingly were anxious to please. I remember I stopped by a window in one of the towns and saw some peaches. I inquired the price, which was six shillings each, or \$1.20 in our money. I asked about bananas. They were surprised. They said when they could get them, which they could not, they were \$1.00 each. Again I thanked God for America!

## *Chapter Two*

### *The Invasion of North Africa*

THERE WAS very little entertainment while in England. We were settling down to the grim task of war and we knew it; we could feel it and sense it. Soon we were awaiting our chance to load and take off. We held communion services, and many took advantage of them; some made decisions for Christ; many were thinking of loved ones, others of what lay ahead. We were to be the invaders. We did not know where we were going, but we were soon on our way. For days and days we travelled the waves. There were hundreds of ships, a sight one never expects to see twice. The details of which I must omit. Many were seasick. I came on deck one day and, seeing the men sitting on the decks with that awful feeling, I smiled and said, "Move over men, you've got company." They grinned back and each day we asked one another, "How do you feel?" The replies would vary.

En route, I visited Scotland, and imagine my surprise when, riding on one of their street cars which had a woman conductor, she would not accept fare because we were Americans. I asked, "Can this really be Scotland I am in?" She smiled. The Scots are really fine people with hearts of gold.

Oh, yes, I left you on the high seas. We must get back to where the many liners (I was on the

## THE INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA

Durbin Castle) plowed majestically on their mission like crusaders of old. Somehow we felt like crusaders, and I know of no more fitting name for the Americans of World War II than "American Crusaders."

The next days were filled with drills, maps, schools, commando tactics, night-unloading practices, and climbing Jacob's ladder with full pack. The water was only three miles deep. I remember that General Oliver was first, I was sixth. This was grim business! No fun!

Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services were held. It was necessary to have three protestant and three Catholic services on Sunday. Jewish services were held on Fridays. Men were beginning to think seriously, some perhaps for the first time in their lives.

One lad died and was buried at sea. Many men came to me and requested, "Chaplain, if anything happens to me, please don't let them bury me at sea." I had the same feeling but could not express it. This is typical of soldiers. They prefer land if they must die, while the traditions of the Navy are "Burials at sea."

We held games, gave away Red Cross kits containing cards, gum, razors, soap; some from the Newark, New Jersey, Chapter were among them given to me while at the YMCA in Scotland. They also had magazines and a few books, not nearly enough of either, and with "sings," impromptu programs arranged by the chaplains, etc., the time passed slowly on as we approached the zero hour.

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Soon we were told that we were going to North Africa and were in the biggest convoy ever assembled at one time. Everywhere ships and more ships; submarines (American) could be seen occasionally. Sometimes a destroyer would streak off, as if it had found a rat (German submarine). Then it would rejoin the convoy. One day I saw one of the American subs emerge and later submerge. It looked like a huge monster, whale, or huge pickering fish. While enroute, we had boat drills, classes in French, tactics, etc. Each man knew where his place was and when to take it. Everything was timed to perfection. I found myself in need of a pianist. My assistant was sent with his peep on another boat, so for weeks I was without his help (and did I need it). However, with the help of volunteers, I carried on. As Senior Chaplain on the boat and chaplain for Combat Command "B", I had some necessary planning to do, for I had been assigned the additional task of Graves' Registration Officer for the Command.

We saw our first exposed electric lights in weeks as we approached Gibraltar. I thought of the Prudential Life Insurance policies with the picture of the "Rock" on the front of them. We tuned in on the radio and heard a broadcast stating that a huge convoy was now going through the Straits of Gibraltar. It didn't please us at all to have our enemies tipped off. We kept on. The details of this naval strategy I shall not reveal. Suffice it to say that at zero hour we had reached our places off the coast of North Africa and, guided by previous

## THE INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA

arranged signals, our convoy had split up and the several sections made for their respective beaches.

Because I could not swim, I had purchased an extra life jacket that could be inflated and which was guaranteed to hold one up for 72 hours. After that??? I also had the Mae West preserver. I figured one of them should work. I was ready. Everyone was tense.

Since we had to wait the long night through, preparatory to taking off, many private prayers were said by men who had never known what it was to find solace in prayer. A few nights before, I held the most solemn memorable Communion Service I ever expect to hold, using the kit my denomination had given to me. It was impressive and well attended (the largest attendance at such a service I've ever held in my life). All participated—officers and men—American, British, Army, Navy, and Commandos. I could sense what must have been the feelings when Jesus served "The Last Supper," as this proved to be the last for some of them.

The time had come! Boats were lowered and the commandos and rangers took off along with others. Soon daylight appeared. I walked out on the deck to watch the firing. Suddenly a shell fell to the starboard side near my position. I decided to go on the other side. As I reached there another shell dropped harmlessly in the water not far away. I imagined what would happen if they kept this up and one hit near where I stood, so I decided "to go in the house" and await the third one. They

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had the range now and the shells seemed to be coming from Fort DuNord near Arzew. The third one did not come, thanks to the Rangers who silenced them in the meantime. I did not have to use my \$14.00 belt.

We were in full pack. I had my musette bag filled to its capacity and more, and had it fastened on my back. Field glasses were around my neck, and a well-filled dispatch case, loaded with necessary office supplies, was slung over one shoulder. I carried my portable radio (sealed) over the other. I had on my first aid belt with sulfa drugs and morphine needles. Of course, I had my Bible. With my surplus (life belt) under everything and heavy trench coat on, the Mae West being on the outside of all this, I took my turn. As I got in the LCT I decided now was the time to fill my \$14.00 belt with air. I couldn't get an ounce of air in it because it should have been on the outside, so I had only the Mae West tube to hold me up. I still have my doubts concerning its ability to do so. Suddenly, the front of the LCT fell out—or, rather, forward—and we stepped off into the water. My shoes leaked immediately as the water reached my shoulders, but we soon made it and waited for our luggage. Finally, without it, except for a heavy overloaded Val-pak, I started up the slope not knowing when I would be stopped, but really without much fear of the enemy.

Our advance troops had already contacted the opposition, and the shelling could be heard within half a mile of where we were. The 2d Tirailleur



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Tunisienne and French 68th Field Artillery were in the melee and furnished stiff resistance. The local population said they had been expecting us for two weeks. Some Americans were reported fired upon by the Arabs, for they thought our men were Germans at first because of our new helmets' similiarity to theirs. Some things had not gone exactly according to plan because of the untimely presence of Admiral Darlan who was not in on this phase of the picture; and while only passive resistance was planned, it proved to be more serious than anticipated for the first few days, during which time both sides suffered losses—the French quite heavily. The hospitals were filled with wounded—one ward French, the next German, and the next American. The reality of war was very vivid here.

## *Chapter Three*

### *In Africa*

I SHALL never forget my first night spent in the City Hall of St. Lieu which was used as a hospital. This was established by Company "B" Forty-Seventh Medical Battalion. The townspeople were friendly and spoke some Spanish. I was able, by use of limited Spanish, French, English, and gestures, to carry on a semblance of conversation with them. A few of the younger folks could talk English. Of course, they were kept busy conversing with Americans, too.

They brought in a soldier of the Sixteenth Infantry who had been wounded in the legs. I talked with him, and that night I lay down on the floor near him. At midnight he passed on to the Great Beyond. We left him there until morning. I didn't sleep much that night. On the next day he was buried with full military honors at an established American Cemetery near Arzew. One other man had preceded him, so his was the second grave. During the next night another lad from the Eighteenth Infantry was brought in. I talked with him. He said, "Everything's all right." Again I slept on the floor near the wounded soldier. During the night he too went on that far journey to his eternal home. He had been machine-gunned in the legs and the shock had proved too much for him.

Airplanes flew over—Americans, Italian, French

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and German. Our men at first were confused as to which to fire on so they fired on all of them, but soon they learned to hold their fire until the plane was identified. The excitement was keen and tense. A couple of our own planes were brought down by this fire. During one period of firing, I noted an Arab sitting face toward the East and praying to Allah. He was talking Arabic as fast as he could and with bowing gestures in keeping with his tempo. He was sincere, but I confess it was somewhat amusing to me as I watched him. He paid no attention to the hail of bullets flying upwards.

Soon tanks were unloaded. The French had surrendered at St. Lieu but the battle was on in earnest elsewhere. At Casablanca, the Third Infantry Division and other troops were engaged, suffering heavier losses. As the men went over the sides of their ships, they yelled. "Praise the Lord and save the Third Division."

The Thirteenth said they were going to use the battle cry "BAAA, baaa," because of the constant diet of roast lamb, leg o'mutton, lamb stew, etc. which we ate on the British ship enroute. One soldier expressed the idea that the United Nations should take Hitler and put him in solitary confinement, feeding him only roast haunch for a month, preliminary to the other punishment to be meted out to him in repayment for his mass murders.

At Oran the Sixth Armored Infantry did not fare so well; nearly one entire battalion sank with

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their ships and nearly two hundred of these drowned. They were fired upon early in the morning point blank by French ships, sixteen-inch guns, and others. Plans had not gone through as expected on account of Admiral Darlan's untimely visit to North Africa to see his son, and who upon learning the situation, ordered resistance.

Our command captured St. Cloud, then Tafaraoui Airport, and followed that by converging and taking the main French airport at LaSenia with about eight-hundred prisoners. Terrific fighting and some American casualties took place in these areas. Colonel John Todd's outfit, First Battalion, Thirteenth Armored Regiment, was very active in this situation.

The enemy (the French were then our enemies as they interfered with our mission) shot down some British planes; and it seemed French planes were shot down everywhere. I personally visited each plane and vehicle in our area for bodies, and I'm certain many Frenchmen had burned to white ashes in their planes. The French buried their own dead as did the Arabs.

I then noticed a half-track (American) completely destroyed. After removing the bodies for burial, I found more dead along the road. Some were charred bodies. Identification was difficult, but in most cases men were identified. While I was debating how best to remove these bodies, a French ambulance drove up. A mademoiselle driver, with what appeared to be a French scout as first aid man, offered help. I was in the act of

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accepting when a soldier ran up and said, "Chaplain, a man has shot himself!" I hurried there and found it to be Sergeant Nightingale of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment. His wound was not self-inflicted, but while a soldier was handing up to him a 50-calibre gun from the inside of the tank it went off, tearing through his side. We sprinkled the sulfanilimide in the wound. I put a compress over it, gave him one-and-a-half injections of morphine in the arm (all men are furnished these in combat) and placed him in the French ambulance, asking that he be taken to the French Civilian Hospital. I checked up later and, as far as I know, he lived, largely because we were on the spot at the time and had been trained in what to do.

After completing these and other burials, I approached a blockade. We had by then captured Oran. Near this blockade I saw a French civilian tugging at something which looked like a one-burner kerosene stove. It was really a mine, and I am still at a loss to understand why it did not go off and kill all of us. He replied, when he saw me calling to him to put it down, that he wanted that *l'essence* stove. Soon he understood and placed it on the ground. I traced two wires leading to a storage battery of a truck nearby and cut those with pliers and warned him to stay away until crews were able to remove the mine.

While at LaSenia Airport we (Chaplain Doyle, Corporal Dehrs, Corporal Whipple, and others assigned to us temporarily) established our

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Graves' Registration Office and set ourselves to the task of caring for our dead. Because of the shortage of transportation facilities, it was necessary to borrow a truck from two Frenchmen of Oran. Later, the battery went dead and it was necessary to trade for a good one (even up) in another disabled abandoned truck along the highway. After getting it in good shape and using it for several days, with our increased responsibilities, one night it mysteriously disappeared. No doubt later it found its way to the rightful owners, for it carried its license plate.

The first evening after this important airport had been seized by the Americans, a French officer, Aide to the Commanding Officer of the captured French airport, requested that he be permitted to go into the City of Oran to see about the welfare of his wife, who was an expectant mother. I agreed to accompany him, and in company with the French Commander's chauffeur and in his car we proceeded to Oran. I did not feel too safe as I saw the French chauffeur pocket a gun (when he thought I wasn't looking) just before we left. I guess that was because he didn't feel too safe either. We arrived at the beautiful apartment which was the home of the Lieutenant of the French Air Forces, and I waited in the car. Soon he returned and insisted that we come up for a few minutes and meet his wife and mother-in-law who could talk some English. They gave us some potato soup, and it was delicious, for we had been almost constantly on "C" rations. I gave

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them an "invasion dollar" (Gold Seal.) They would not accept it for themselves, but when I suggested they keep it for the new arrival, they replied that they would keep it, and that this would always be my passport into their home. I learned later that they had been forced to leave their home in Paris. They had been expecting the Americans to come and give them equipment so they could liberate their homeland and they were now anxious to fight by our side. I suggested that the officer stay with his wife and that we would get him in the morning. He said, "No, I must return to my men."

"You are welcome to stay," I said.

"No, we will all return."

In a few days the French were given back their arms which had been taken following their capture and arrangements were made for their policing the population.

Our work completed, we were soon to press on to eliminate the Germans from North Africa. We visited the hospitals and did everything we could to make our men more comfortable. There were several American and many French casualties. I purchased tangerines, cookies, gum, etc., from British ship stores and other sources; and they, together with things donated by Americans, seemed to help those who were able to benefit by them.

We soon were ordered to proceed toward the new front. It seemed we traveled for days. One night, near Constantine, in our bivouac we could see the flashes and hear the explosions of Nazi

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bombs many miles away. On we went under cover of blackout at night until we reached Souk-Ahras. We had no sooner gotten into bivouac than the Nazi's came over and dropped some bombs. A couple dropped near and struck a building; however, no one was killed. They also dropped "booby traps" consisting of cigaret tins (British), fountain pens, etc., so arranged as to explode when tampered with. Some casualties that I knew of occurred in this manner among the British. British hospitals were in evidence.

Our Command Headquarters were moved to wherever the necessity warranted. Under Major General L. Oliver and Brigadier General P. M. Robinett, who shortly afterwards succeeded General Oliver in command, this was a busy place, with maps everywhere and strategy taking place that was later to mean much. We tarried only long enough to map out our course and "carry on." Major Wayne Smart was Supply Officer and kept necessary supplies, including plenty of "C" rations, on their way. Major Dave Long, Lieutenant Colonel "Bugs" Cairns, Lieutenant Colonel Al. Russell, Major (now Lieutenant Colonel) Gardner, Lieutenant Colonel "Daddy Rabbit" John Todd, Lieutenant Colonel Bruss, Major Carr, and many others were among those who were carrying heavy responsibilities. Chaplain John Carper, especially in the closing phrases of the campaign in North Africa, performed outstanding work and assisted the author, along with Chaplain Doyle and





**Chaplains—Northern Ireland**



**Chaplains of First Armored Division**

# CAMPAIGN for TUNISIA

(Battle lines shown are those of  
week beginning March 7, 1943)

Axis supply route is  
across Straits of Sicily



Map by Gilbert Sweeney, reproduced from "Stars and Stripes"



## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

taking the initiative. Our forces met with reverses, and withdrawal toward Medjez el Bab seemed necessary. Following the battle near Long Stop Hill, we dug in to hold the ground occupied and to prevent the Nazis from gaining additional ground. Soon the British and French took over, and we proceeded to other trouble points at Sbeitla, Sidi Bou Sid, Faïd, etc. We were constantly on the move. It seemed like checker playing—moving wherever we thought we could outwit the enemy.

While we had very little time for scenery, yet, true to American custom and fashions, we found time to visit Roman ruins, including those at Heïdra, Sbeitla, Dugga, Tebessa, and many others as well as see and talk with the native Arabs, who dressed in a manner which would take one back to Biblical days. With their turbans, scandals, and long flowing robes (where they seemed to be able to hide anything they desired within the folds), they were picturesque. Some natives could speak a little English, but French seemed to be used as much as Arabic, or even more so in some sections. There were the Algerian Arabs and the Tunisian Arabs, and they seemed to separate themselves similarly to various political parties. The women of one sect covered their heads (except for one eye which they had exposed) with a shawl covering the remaining part of their heads. The others wore clothes similar to our Nuns, except that the lower part of their faces were covered, showing both eyes. They all seemed queer to us Amer-

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icans, and perhaps we seemed queer to them. In some cases they would beg for cigarets and expose their full faces, but in most cases they had just as well be covered as far as beauty was concerned.

Upon one occasion three Arab women were having their pictures taken (this is usually frowned upon by them) in a ten-cent store, or its equivalent, by machines such as we have in our own country. I tried to trade one of mine for one of theirs, but was not successful. Apparently they thought they would get the worst of the bargain.

Everywhere we stopped, Arabs would gather in large numbers, the children called out "O.K." or "*Bon Bon's*" and the French "*Vive Americans*," "*Vive La France*," "*Comrades*." Many of the little children seemed undernourished, and it was not uncommon to see them naked and, all of them (as well as the Arab women) barefooted.

The country of North Africa is comparable to America in some ways. Parts of it are scenic, other sections mountainous, some valleys have fertile fields covered with bright red poppies, some of it is dry, with sandy deserts, some just rocky. It reminded me of Arkansas and Colorado.

However, the general attitude of the men can best be described by use of an actual illustration. One time the chaplain asked a colored soldier where he was from. He replied, "Alabama, suh." I said, "Well I guess you will be glad when you can return to Alabama." To which he replied, "I'll be glad when I can return anywhere in America, suh."

## *Chapter Four*

### *Kasserine*

WE WERE bivouaced for a time at Sbeitla, a little town controlled by a French mayor, consisting mostly of Arabs and native soldiers. A French garrison had been quartered here and the Germans had taken over, only to leave at the approach of Americans, and then to storm back and take it again for one day. The next day they were thrust out of it again and pushed back to Sidi Bou Sid. Soon we were ordered to Maktar. It seemed the French were finding resistance stubborn in the vicinity of Ousseltia, Pichon, and Kairouan. Here, for the first time, American troops operated under command of the French XIX Army Corps, with Combat Command "B", under General Robinett, playing an important and decisive part. Here the chaplains of Command "B" established a forward cemetery as had to be done prior to each action in which we participated. A suitable place (for this temporary cemetery) was located directly back of a beautiful church. Lt. E. E. Brown of Atlanta, Georgia was among the officers who made the supreme sacrifice in this action. For two nights, the chaplains slept in one of the few buildings not destroyed, across from the grain elevator, in order to be near the cemetery. The madame had at one time been the governess for Kermit Roosevelt and his brother. She met her husband while in New York and had come to North Africa to live.

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Chaplain Doyle had managed to purchase five dozen eggs at Maktar, fifty miles away, and we were going to live "high" and supplement our "C" rations. During the night, while we were asleep, Goum soldiers (Moroccans) who were quartered near, removed the panel of the door, took the eggs, and replaced the panel without awakening the chaplain who slept near by. I slept in a different part of the house and had a basket of tangerines in the same room with me which was still there in the morning. Two of Colonel Zanuck's movie men from the Signal Corps were with us and none of us heard any unusual noises that night other than that caused by high winds.

While we were burying our dead, the enemy planes would sometimes strafe the town or drop a bomb here and there much to our discomfort. It was for service rendered in this area that I was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* with gold star by the French.

After a few days of intense action here, we were ordered again to Sbeitla, but the chaplains were delayed at Maktar to care for the burials of three Air Corps men. Two more had bailed out and were safe. Under cover of darkness, we started forward to rejoin Combat Command "B".

Since it was necessary many times that we remain behind to complete our work of burying the dead, we had to hurry to catch up with our unit. Our Commanding General appreciated this fact, and more or less left us on our own, knowing the work would be conscientiously cared for.

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When Major General L. Oliver left us at Sbeitla, he said to the chaplains, "If all our officers had done as much as our chaplains, and as fine work, we would be further along with this war than we are." He meant that if all were as conscientious as the chaplains had proved themselves to be nothing could stop our victory; the war would be over even sooner than we anticipated. One General said to me at Kasserine Pass, "Chaplain, it must afford you a great deal of satisfaction to know you have done your work well and to have so many speak highly of your work."

Under cover of darkness, Chaplain Doyle, our drivers or assistants, and I moved toward Sbeitla again, stopping only when enemy planes were near to seek temporary safety. Then moving on in our little "peeps", we reached the French garrison. We had intended to go into the olive groves near the town until we were told that the enemy was in that section of those olive trees, and we should wait until morning. Since it was late, and we were further persuaded by the offer of some French fried potatoes, we remained and slept in the quarters of the French chaplain. We heard the roar of gunfire in the distance, but because we were very weary, we went soundly to sleep, only to be awakened in the early morning, about 0200 hours. We were informed that the Americans were leaving and, of course, we lost no time in leaving ourselves. All the time, our tanks were engaging the enemy; and Colonel Gardner had suffered some losses of tanks, including his own. He then trans-



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ferred to another tank. When it was disabled, he crawled to a ditch near by and observed the enemy under unusual circumstances. He had been given up as lost but he showed up later after some harrowing experiences.

As we left the French garrison the troops were on the alert. Fireworks were everywhere, some tracers coming down the road behind us and bouncing over our heads. One soldier was seated on a peep, crying. When I asked what was the matter, he told how his truck of ammunition had been caught in a cross-fire, near the town, between American and enemy tanks, and he left it only to see it go up in flames a little later. We started our withdrawal. I suggested to Corporal Whipple that we watch the fireworks (it would have been beautiful on the fourth of July). He replied, "If it's all the same to you, sir, I think we should clear out of here." This we promptly did and tried to locate our service company in order to give them word of the withdrawal, but they were concealed so well that we could not find them readily. Soon, however, an officer accompanied one of the truck drivers to their area, and they were instructed to evacuate. The withdrawal by units was as orderly as possible. Of course, as can be expected, some had lost their units and later joined them. We continued and stopped with a medical unit which had just been ordered to withdraw. After refueling our "peep," we kept on going to an ammunition dump at Tebessa. With news reporters Hal Boyle and A. A. Devine, I waited, occasionally hearing en-

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emy planes overhead in the darkness and the chilly rain. Soon we were all together and the chaplains stopped near Tebessa at sight of a "Red Cross". Thinking we might get doughnuts and coffee, we stopped to find it was the dispensary for the railroad unit near by. They invited us to eat with them; no second invitation was necessary. They treated us like kings. We received real white bread (it seemed like cake) for the first time in months, and coffee, jelly and meat. Later we took several meals with this outfit, conducted services for them, etc., and upon one occasion did have doughnuts and coffee with them. I wish time would permit me to pay a tribute to these brave railroad men. They played an important part in the transportation situation in getting supplies to the various railheads, and there was a deep sincerity about them that one could not help but notice.

For a while it looked as though Rommel might break through to Tebessa, but not for long. Soon we reorganized and moved out near Heidra. Even though roads were muddy and it was raining, it did not deter us because we were going in the direction we wanted to go—against the enemy. The forward elements had moved on to Kasserine Pass CP location. Ours was the last vehicle to move across that road before enemy fire was laid on it. I did believe for awhile, because of the condition of the roads, that we wouldn't make it, but again the little "peep" proved itself and took us through flying.

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### AT KASSERINE PASS

While we were at Kasserine Pass, our artillery and our infantry, as well as our tanks, made it so interesting for the Nazis that they fled; and Rommel was reported to be returning to Germany a sick man.

It must be said that Rommel was respected by military men for his fair play and military strategy, as well as for his qualities as a soldier. We had such men as General Ward, General Oliver, General Robinett, Brigadier General Terry Allen, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, and others of equal abilities, under such men as Major General George Patton and Major General Omar Bradley. Major General M. Harmon succeeded General Ward as First Armored Division Commander. Because of the general situation it had been impossible for General Ward to use his entire division as a unit in action against the enemy. This later was made possible under General Harmon, and was done with great success. Task forces or combat commands were necessary with attached units to make an effective striking force. One was commanded by Brigadier General McQuillin who was a former Commanding Officer of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment. Another task force was under Colonel C. C. Benson who later was in command of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment, which, at the time of this writing, is commanded by Colonel H. H. Howze. Colonel Howze was Battalion Commander prior to his assuming command of this important regiment of the First Armored Division.

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It was while we were at Kasserine Pass that three enemy planes came over the CP of Combat Command "B" and strafed the area. I remember flinging myself over the side of a hill and hugging Mother Earth during this brief interlude. Immediately thereafter, a lone plane dived from the clouds above and came down with his guns barking and hit Captain Quentin Roosevelt. I was one of the first to reach him and immediately went for a medico who soon attended his wounds and sent him to a hospital from which he was later evacuated to the United States. I was told he returned as soon as he had recovered to the scene of action. He was an Artillery Officer and a son of the late General Roosevelt, with whom, in company with Colonel Campbell of Hardin, Montana, I was honored in having lunch at their CP at Ousseltia. En-route to our visit with General Roosevelt, we had to abandon our vehicle and take to the rocks for shelter from ten Jerry planes which were overhead. I lost the most blood from this action in trying to seek safety among the rocks. Scratches and bruises were many, but after giving myself first aid and getting one of the officers at General Roosevelt's CP to bandage my hand, I was ready to carry on. Of course, we thought they were shooting at us; instead of that they were apparently bent on shooting down the two lone American planes. One of the pilots bailed out and was wounded in the leg; he was evacuated. The other was killed.

Upon one occasion while we were at Sbeitla and

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quartered temporarily for the night, I was alone in the communications building. I looked out during the daylight to see the sky full of Nazi planes, some only a few feet from the window with their guns barking. I thought my time had come, and that the building which sheltered me was about to be strafed and bombed. Soon I saw two enemy planes collide in mid air, explode and plummet toward the earth. I decided it was time for me to hunt cover, so I went to the other side of the building and took a horizontal position on the floor, trying to draw my 190 pounds under my all-too-small helmet, and offering some extra prayers. I soon ventured to look out and saw three burning planes near me. I opened the door and saw another a mile away. I learned a fifth had been shot down a few miles farther—all by a lone American from Iowa, by the name of Boone, I believe, in a Spitfire. I assisted in putting out the fires, tried unsuccessfully to extricate the pilot of one, directed the safety of those around. Two prisoners had bailed out and were taken to Kasserine Hospital. Twelve dead were buried by the French.

It seemed as though there was never a dull moment for the chaplains of Combat Command "B". Everywhere the chaplain went he was greeted like "home folks". In the hospitals, as he made his rounds, he was called on for encouraging vital news from the front and gave bits of news to bolster the men up.

In one of the hospitals we encountered Lieutenant David Robb, another one of our fine officers.

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

He had been wounded severely and the chaplain was told by the British medical officers of this hospital at Souk Ahras that if some gelatin could be secured at once his life might be saved. The chaplain and his assistant lost no time in going to Bone and, after trying several places, secured from a British ship captain the necessary gelatin. We then drove in blackout across treacherous mountains in the rain in vain effort to save this officer's life. He lived a few weeks and the chaplain brought his mail to him. The general also visited him but it was not long until he went to the Great Beyond. He assured the chaplain he was not afraid to go and was prepared to do so.

In this same hospital, another incident took place which I pass on to you because of its interesting features. The name of this soldier will not be given, but he was a member of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment. As the writer was moving among the wounded men, one called him and asked, "Chaplain, kneel down beside me." This I did. He went on to say, "Chaplain, as we were fighting in the vicinity of Medjez el Bab, we were separated from our Commanding Officer. I started with my tank looking for him when suddenly one of my men exclaimed, 'Sergeant, I'm shot.' I replied, 'I'm shot, too!' One of the crew suggested we turn back. I gave the order and then remembered that simply because some of us were wounded we should not turn back. I gave the order for the men to go back and carry on as long as they could, that I was getting out. I was in the turret

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and, as I started to climb out, I fell forward and must have fainted because, when I came to, the tank was moving over me (they no doubt thought I had cleared it). Fortunately, I was between the two treads and was unharmed. I heard the sound of approaching tanks. Not knowing if they were friendly or not, I put my handkerchief on a stick and waved it. It so happened that they were two tanks from my platoon. They loaded me in one and the next thing I knew we were in an Arab shack and an Arab was leaning over me with some broth he had made. When darkness came, we again entered the tanks and were lost until we saw a sign 'Tunis' city limits (this was several months before we finally did enter Tunis). We then went back through enemy lines to our own without misfortune, and here I am. Chaplain, I promised the Lord if I ever got out of there, I'd never gamble, use profanity, or drink again—that I'd be a Christian." With that he asked to be baptized and served communion.

Then he said, "Chaplain, I don't know if these three wounds are going to take me or not, but if I can know that my loved ones back in the States do not have to go through the suffering and hardships experienced by the people we have seen, I'll feel that any sacrifice I have had to make was worth while." That seems to be the spirit of Americans everywhere.

Just as the Saviour gave his all in sacrifice for the sins of mankind, willingly, so these men willingly give their all on the altars of patriotism for

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their country and their loved ones, in order that they might continue to sing "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Yes, young men took on a different attitude. They seemed to age ten years in a few days. Men who had been eager to get into the fray after having met the Mark VI's and having had some of their tanks shot out from under them, were a little more sober, more judicious and, if possible, more determined toward ultimate victory. However, they never lost their humor. They referred to our commanding general, General Robinett, as Napoleon, because of his military ability which seemed to be that of a genius. All his men respected this ability. He was ever concerned about the welfare of his men, and I have known him to stay up all night and wait for reports of patrols which had been sent out on missions and which invariably were able to report success. While in the rush of battle, it is impossible to give all their just dues; now, since the noise and dust of battle are cleared away, he and others like him will become immortal in history.

I feel sure that most of the leaders appreciated the value of religion to the soldier. It, perhaps, was a great morale factor in keeping the soldier unafraid and responsive in the hour of supreme test, giving him the courage that was so essential, and enabling him, through the unseen power within, to wage a successful campaign against his enemies, both physical and spiritual.

Upon another occasion, while the services were



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in progress at the forward command post of Combat Command "B", we were singing "The Star Spangled Banner," and when we reached the phrase, "the bombs bursting in air," the enemy accommodated us by dropping bombs half a mile away. The reality of the significance of this great song was then made more clear and real to us.

These and similar instances were the regular procedure from time to time, but none seemed more significant than the one upon one such occasion when the unit had requested services and the chaplain responded. The unit was a reserve Tank Battalion, and when the chaplain arrived, all were assembled under the trees. Everyone was there. The chaplain spoke and said, "Men, how does it happen we have such a large attendance today? Back at Fort Knox I had to urge some of you to go to church." One sergeant spoke up and said, "Chaplain, those German 88's are making believers out of us."

Those 88's were known as "Demoralizers." The boys have a poem, or, rather, a song entitled "Those 88's are breaking up that old gang o' mine." Anyone who has heard them as they came swishing through the air can appreciate what that old sergeant said.

Nowhere did I come across men who were unreligious. I did meet many who told me if they lived to get back home they would take an active part in church life; and many said they had prayed for the first time in their lives. Many, who never before had given the matter serious consideration,

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made professions of religion. Among them were high army officers, West Point graduates, as well as enlisted men from the homes of America.

Yes, Americans have become real missionaries, too. Everywhere they promote good will. As I was conducting services in the bandstand on the square at Souk Ahras, several French and Arabs stood by in awe, seeing the chaplain's flag waving. Americans from nearby were in attendance. At the conclusion, one Frenchman came up and asked, "What country has taken over." I pointed to the cross on my collar and replied, "Padre," and pointed to a church spire and added, "American church service," which he seemed to understand.

I had Arabs in several services and helped some with their wounds. They saw the Red Cross band and thought the chaplain was a doctor. If there was a doctor near, the chaplain usually referred them to him; if not, he did his best. Yes, the men had church services right up at the front. In fact, they demanded them, and I believe they were better soldiers with the increased fortitude their religion afforded them. Sometimes we improvised the "peep" hood for an altar, sometimes used a mess table, sometimes only with a group, no music, we held a service with just a talk by the chaplain and the Lord's Prayer. Most of the time, however, we took our folding organ and held regular brief religious services, which seemed most appreciated by the men.

At one time when it was raining hard, the chaplain suggested to the Commanding Officer that



**Left: Major Wayne Smart at Message Center with Cpl. Martin Cohen**



**Kasserine Valley—Near which Captain Quentin Roosevelt was wounded**

**Chaplain  
H. P. Abbott,  
left, and  
Chaplain  
John Carper,  
right**





**Isolated graves —  
Later moved to  
cemetery**



**Modern Fox Hole  
in North Africa**



**Chaplain  
Abbott,  
left, and  
Assistant  
T-5  
Henry  
Whipple**

**Enemy tank after  
gunfire treatment  
by Americans**



**Typical Arab  
street scene,  
Setif, North Africa**

**Chaplain  
Abbott in  
combat  
regalia near  
captured  
enemy tank**





**Col. Zanuck's photographers in Signal Corps at  
Ousseltia, North Africa**



**Brigadier General  
P. M. Robinett at  
Teboursouk, North Africa**



**Enemy prisoners pose for picture at Ousseltia**



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tinued their drive on the Germans toward Gafsa, ultimately joining up with the British Eighth Army. Everywhere could be seen German planes, wreckage of tanks, some British, some American, mostly Italian and German, including the Tiger or Mark VI tanks. The latter at one time seemed formidable, but, because of their lack of speed and maneuverability, were found to be vulnerable. I understand that fifty-two of these tanks used in North Africa were put out of commission by the British and Yanks. In the early stages of the campaign, it seemed we were outnumbered in the air, but as the war progressed, our forces grew until we finally had complete domination of the skies. It was a great sight to see American bombers and fortresses (at one time I counted ninety-six flying fortresses) in the air on their way to bomb Naples, Sousse, Bizerte or Tunis. It was a great sight and each time (although the men in planes were unaware of it) cheers arose from the men on the ground, whose morale was materially raised by these welcome sights. Each time they returned the men would count them and offer prayers that any missing might come on in. This was the case many times as one, two or three lone planes would bring up the rear a few minutes later. To supply and keep on the move a large Army is a big task—with food supplies, ammunition, gasoline and equipment to be furnished, roads to build, mines to be cleared, water points and depots to be established, railheads, and emergency cemeteries, as well as prisoner of war stockades to be designated,



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enemy dead to be buried and wounded to be cared for and evacuated. But the men who were charged with these responsibilities were up to the job and carried through in a marvelous manner. Marshall Foch said at one time, "The Next war will be decided in North Africa," meaning that whoever controlled North Africa would have a distinct advantage. This proved to be true, for it was a proving ground, a testing place where we could experiment against the enemy with various armor, tanks, anti-tanks, bazookas, etc., in addition to fitting our men by this experience for what was ahead and establishing air bases essential to our successful continuation of the war in the Mediterranean. These were fully utilized and the success of the war bears out this prediction.

The Italians (most of them) seemed to want to surrender, and one morning at our CP headquarters near Maknassy I noticed several Italian prisoners working on the road. I talked with them. Each private wore two stars; one on either lapel of his tunic. They learned I was a chaplain by the cross and several gave me their stars. They told me they had surrendered at daylight, and that they wanted to do so a couple days sooner. When I asked why they did not, they replied that the German officer in command refused to permit them. I then asked if he had changed his mind, to which they replied, smilingly, that he went off to sleep and they had killed him. They were then afraid to return to their own lines and also afraid to surrender before daylight, so with truck and

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all (about twenty of them) had driven right up to our CP and surrendered. Many of them volunteered to assist the chaplain in digging graves for both enemy and Americans. At the crossroads at Kasserine Valley, some were helping but did not seem to have their heart in their work. When I inquired why all the gloom they said that they were told by the Germans we had them dig graves then buried them in the graves they had dug. I laughed and told them Americans did not do that. They were much relieved. I further stated these graves were for "Allmand" or Germans, and they worked with increased ardor.

Upon another occasion in this area, Chaplain Doyle (the Catholic chaplain) and I had conducted burial services for German and Italian dead. We then turned things over to an Italian sergeant, who had recognized a couple of the Italian dead as buddies. They said services together and replied in unison. At the conclusion all twenty-four of them rendered American hand salute. Chaplain Doyle and I were about to leave when each man came to us and saluted (American method), shook hands with us with tears in his eyes, which was an expression of gratefulness for being permitted to participate in the burial of the dead, and to see they were given decent burial by the American chaplains. Oh, yes, the chaplain has many duties besides burial of the dead: holding conferences with officers and men; attending staff meetings; keeping up to date with the local situation; breaking news (sometimes bad news) to his men and

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letting them cry on his shoulder, so to speak. Many times this was literally true. When anyone griped in the Army, someone was likely to say, "Aw, go tell it to the chaplain," for the chaplain was recognized as a fixer. He was the only man that stood between the officers and men. As an officer he was respected and as a chaplain he was loved. I was riding on a train one day in the United States and one soldier said to a man who I presumed was his father, "The chaplain can get anything done. If you are broke, go see him; if you want a leave, go to see him; if you are in trouble, go see him. He will help you." While this statement was a little overdrawn it is true that the men appreciated the confidence of the chaplain and did not hesitate to call on him, on a man to man basis, and to talk over his many problems. One soldier told his minister that overseas the chaplain even took the place of mother as well as father to his men. A chaplain can advise the soldier of the proper procedure to follow in his particular situation.

The chaplain's assistant is a very valuable man for he is, in time of war, driver, personal body-guard, secretary, organist, orderly, and anything else his many duties may require. Sometimes he even lightens the load for the chaplain for he is usually respected equally as much because of his position as the chaplain's assistant. One first sergeant made the statement to the writer that he would rather be a corporal and the chaplain's assistant than to be a first sergeant. The work

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however, was not always pleasant, which comprised driving at night, hearing snipers' bullets whiz by in the dark, driving in the mud and rain and sleet, in the blackout, over mountains, sometimes near enemy territory, living on "C" rations except for a few eggs or tangerines, and recovering bodies from tanks put out of commission in the fights, with mine fields and booby traps to be contended with, when a wrong step might mean the last. Somehow it was assumed that the chaplain was immune to these, and from actual experience, I am inclined to believe that God just protected especially the chaplain from these hazards in order that he might carry on his work which was so important, there being so few of them to do the work at hand.

Occasionally there was a so-called rest period from actual fighting. Men would bathe and wash their clothes and get caught up with a little rest as the opportunity afforded, but for the chaplain it was only a continuation of his work: visiting the men in bivouac, holding services, sings, cheering them up, visiting hospitals, sending money orders, arranging programs, and doing many things required of him. Soon it would be time to move up again. Perhaps he would be able to pick up some mail and bring back to the outfit. Many times while about his tasks, the chaplain would face important decisions which had to be made promptly. He was advisor to the Commanding General on all matters of morale and religion. The chaplain endeavored to work for the best interest

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of all, forgetting self in the task that was his alone. Many times he was in range of enemy fire in carrying out his duties at the front during and immediately following combat. Sometimes the Commanding General would have special missions for the chaplain to carry out. These he always did promptly.

Sometimes the chaplain himself would feel like turning in at a hospital, but when he would see men with eyes out, legs off, arms off, bullet holes in their throats, or otherwise maimed by war, and still smiling, he could do nothing less than breathe a prayer for these men. Like the Apostle Paul of old, "he could only press on" to the task at hand, and make his contribution to the war by providing religious ministrations and moral encouragement to his men, and assuring friends that those who had paid the supreme sacrifice had proper and decent burial. The chaplain stood between the loved ones at home and the soldier on the battlefield, in life and death.

Yes, the chaplain who works at his job has a seven-day-week task and twenty-four-hour day. His work is ended when he himself is disabled or answers the Supreme Commander's summons.

## *Chapter Five*

### *Stuka Valley*

There'll be Stukas over  
The vale of Tebourba  
Tomorrow when I'm having tea,  
There'll be spitfires after—  
Ten minutes after  
When they're no bloody use to me.

Sung to the tune of "The White Cliffs of Dover."

While there is a certain romantic appeal in the idea of a "fighting parson," in the midst of a charge, with rolled up shirt sleeves, begrimed, and carrying a gun in his hand during a desperate situation, there is something even more stirring and equally romantic and inspiring, when he moves quietly among his men, talking with small groups and encouraging those who are homesick and afraid to carry on. The chaplain's presence in a danger area with death on every hand, himself without protection, soothing the injured, praying with some, administering to others, taking the last words of the dying, or helping those who are unable to help themselves, is in itself an inspiration to his men. This is the real task of the chaplain, for he is too busy with his job on hand to wage a one-man war. To him, when the enemy is dead, in the hospital, or a prisoner of war and in captivity, he is no longer considered in the broadest sense, "enemy."

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The writer saw enemy prisoners weep sincerely when a few small kindnesses were shown. Some dying, appreciated a little kindness. While I confess there were times when it seemed difficult to show the proper attitude, yet the writer believes that is what the Bible means by teaching we should, "return good for evil," and it will be "like heaping coals of fire upon thine enemy's head." It is only through this manner that we can promote a spirit of brotherhood in a world in which war shall thrive no more. Even on the battlefield there are times when the Christ-like spirit prevails over the gods of war.

Upon one occasion three German prisoners in a British hospital asked me for the names of three American officers that had accompanied them on a hospital train. When I inquired as to why they wanted their names, they replied, "They were so nice to us, and after the war we want to show our appreciation by sending them something." This from enemy soldiers!

Of course, my experiences have been duplicated many times by other chaplains, and reports can never fully describe the work of the chaplain as he moves about among the men he contacts. Officers and men come to appreciate him.

Among those who served with the First Armored Division were Chaplain Ed Martin, Division Chaplain, who worked tirelessly; Chaplain Brock of the First Armored Regiment, who was captured by the Germans and became a prisoner of war. He was with his medico and halftrack bringing

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wounded to a French hospital and, on return under cover of darkness apparently took the wrong road which led into enemy lines. Also there were Chaplain Ed Donaghue, who was awarded the silver star; Chaplain John Carper, Thirteenth Armored Regiment, who did outstanding work in extreme danger. He assisted the writer in Grave's Registration activities for Combat Command "B", as did Chaplain Basil Doyle and many others. The highest service possible to humanity is performed by these "soldiers of God."

Impromptu services were held whenever and wherever the chaplain made his appearance. The writer held as many as six services on Sunday and one or two almost daily, besides visiting here and there among the troops. Upon one occasion, while the chaplain was speaking in Stuka Valley, he saw a German plane shot down about two miles away and burst into flames, without the congregation's knowledge until the services were over. At another time, services had started in the Sixth Infantry area in the same valley and twenty-four Jerry planes came over, disrupting the services three times. Each time the chaplain and men returned until the services were finally concluded. It was reported that three enemy planes had been shot down by concentrated fire as these planes flew over. This is one of the first accounts recorded of a service conducted on the Installment Plan.

While in Stuka Valley, I was invited to Lieutenant Colonel John "Daddy Rabbit" Todd's Bat-



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talion for a good meal, consisting of fried chicken and roast pork, a rare delicacy that can be managed only on infrequent occasions in the field. As we walked across the plowed fields to my peep, I noticed what appeared to be a butchered cow, from the trees. I made the remark to the Colonel that it looked like a steak carcass to which he replied, "No, Chaplain, that was a wild deer that came dashing through the area last night, and the guard challenged it at least twice before he let him have it." Of course, that was explanation enough for me.

Colonel Todd then sat in the peep with me, with his arm around my shoulder, and told me how it hurt him to lose his men and that he was scheduled to be next. I said, "Don't talk that way." He said, "Yes, they are going to get me next." I never saw him alive after that. He was from Georgia and carried a distinct southern accent that everyone enjoyed. He would say, with a smile, "I'm just a big country boy trying to get along." His chaplain, Captain John Carper, officiated at his burial in a beautiful cemetery, and this service was attended by many of his officers and men, including the Commanding General of Combat Command "B", Brigadier General P. M. Robinett. It was while directing fire and a charge with his tanks that a piece of shrapnel struck Colonel Todd and killed him instantly.

He seemed to have a premonition of his going, and in his going the Army lost a great leader. Everyone that knew him loved him.

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From Stuka Valley we went to Maktar and Ousseltia. It was during this action that the writer was awarded the French Croix De Guerre with Gold Star and later was twice recommended for the Legion of Merit. His greatest reward, however, was in the satisfaction and consciousness of knowing he had done his best!

My assistant and I never hesitated to visit Roman ruins when we were not unduly delayed by doing so. We learned their history, but since we did not record it, very little remains with us. It seemed that every place one traveled he could see Roman ruins. Corporal Whipple would point in the direction of these ruins and say, "Roman ruins." I would point to us and say, "American ruins."

To see the Roman ruins including the old bath tubs, and to reflect upon the ancients who lived in these historical remains, carries one back to the days of Christ. Some of the town's names remind one of ancient history. Among them is Constantine, which is a fortress of the first order and practically impregnable by being situated on a solid block of rocks rising perpendicularly nearly a thousand feet and encircled on the east and north by a deep ravine about seventy-five yards wide, according to one guide book; and Carthage, another famous city of the Romans is rich in ancient history. These places have been the scenes of many battles. The Stars and Stripes, in an article whitten by Milton Lehamn, gives a most interesting story of the "goums" which are

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"Berbers" from Morocco. These "goums" wear a sort of striped bathrobe garment called "Djlelva" and on their heads they wear a turban which they call "chech." The "goum" was a night fighter going on foot into the enemy lines like a panther, and who waylaid unwary groups of carefree Germans, ambushing the enemy and killing officers. They were armed with rifles and bayonets and some even had tommyguns, which were their pride and joy. The chaplain personally knew several of these "goums."

We were picking up various languages as we talked with the natives; Spanish, French, and Arabic. It amused my driver to have me ask in one of these languages if the party addressed spoke Spanish, French, or Arabic. They would become very much excited because I could speak their language and then would report with a lot of "lingo" which I did not understand. Then I would ask the directions in English and they would stand as though amazed, for they could not understand good American English. Later on, of course, we had to improve our language technique in order to accomplish anything. With my small knowledge of Spanish and French and my ability to make gestures, I was able to make myself understood. Sometimes, however, I had to call on my assistant as French interpreter.

We moved on up near Mateur under cover of darkness. Since our bivouac in the olive groves near a bridge was too close to the line of fire, the

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General ordered a removal to an area a mile or so farther, with the protection of the hills.

I remember the first night I spent there. I felt quite uncomfortable, for I could see Arabs living in the caves of the cliffs overhead, and I assumed that Germans could live there equally as well. While we were there, Rabbi Isserman, from St. Louis, Missouri, representative of the Red Cross, visited us, and we had lunch which consisted of coffee, cheese, "C" rations, and jam, to the accompanying music of shells landing near by up over the hill.

The Rabbi held a service for the Jewish men and consulted with the Regimental Commander and the Commanding General regarding the work of the Red Cross.

Shortly after, General Robinett had to leave for an appointment in the old bivouac area for the planning of further action. It was when he was returning that a shell bursted near, and shrapnel went through the leg of his driver and then through his own leg, injuring both so severely htat they were immediately evacuated to the hospital. While the General had an important part in making the plans which led shortly thereafter to the capitulation of the enemy, he was not able to see them executed and was eventually evacuated to the United States.

## THE NAZI ON THE RUN

Near Mateur, we decided to establish a temporary cemetery. While trying to find a suitable

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location, we were caught between enemy fire and a water point which they were seeking to destroy. Chaplain Carper and myself, together with our assistants, sought refuge in a ditch nearby. Every time a shell passed over, we thought it was going to hit us and we buried our heads deeper in our helmets and offered some extra prayers. Every time we lifted our heads, another shell seemed to come roaring over. Finally, we were able to time them and made for our vehicle and a more healthful location between intervals.

After finding the only suitable location, which was the City Park, we later learned that it was in direct line of gunfire of the enemy. There we were compelled to do calisthenics a great deal of the time by jumping in the vacant graves that had been dug, and by flinging ourselves on the ground. As the enemy 88's sang over our heads they seemed to be coming directly at us.

The Germans, in their retreat from Mateur, blew up the bridge on the main highway; however, in a few short hours our engineers had erected in its place a good one made of steel girders.

As we went over this bridge I was much impressed by the big sign with the name, "Huey P. Long Bridge." Evidently some of these engineers were from Louisiana.

Upon another occasion at Medjez el Bab, I was sent to investigate a plane crash in which four Americans had lost their lives and of which there were six survivors. As I crossed the bridge, British and French soldiers challenged me, but after look-

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ing at my passport, permitted me to proceed. I continued on until I reached Lt. McDevitt's tank unit. When he saw me he exclaimed, "Chaplain, what are you doing away up here?" I replied, "I came to see what you were doing. If my congregation can't come where I am, I must go where they are." Needless to say, the men grouped around, and we had a nice visit.

It did not relieve my anxiety to note that the noise I was hearing was the enemy trying to blow up the bridge I had just come over. After getting directions on the plane crash, I returned across this same bridge and not a soul was in sight. I then started in search of the fortress that had been shot down, and with the assistance of an Arab lad, I was guided to its position. It was necessary to place all four recovered bodies on our peep along with four of us who were alive and travel about fifty miles to the nearest cemetery available for burial. The enemy was in possession of one near by. Upon our arrival at the cemetery, one entire company of British troops turned out, and, even though it was late at night, they assisted with digging the graves and rendering full military honors to the dead. With the assistance of the survivors, all the bodies were identified.

It may be interesting to note that later, while I was convalescing as a patient in the Army and Navy Hospital at Hot Springs, Arkansas, one of these six survivors visited me.

While we were recovering the dead from Hill 609 northeast of Beja, shells (88's) began to drop



**Underground passages—Central heating plant—Pipes made by unique process**



**Roman ruins at Sebeitla—At one time over 100,000 inhabitants**





**Sebeitla—Arabs hiding their faces**



**C. P. Headquarters,  
Combat Command "B"**

**Left: Roman ruins at Sebeitla—  
Chaplain Abbott in archway**





**Above: Arab women carrying wood**



**Right: Arab woman in costume**

**Below: Arab village in North Africa**





**Left:  
Chaplain  
Abbott  
conducting  
Protestant  
burials at  
Ousseltia**

**Below:  
Italian  
prisoners  
volunteer for  
grave  
digging  
detail**



**Right:  
Chaplain  
Doyle,  
Catholic,  
conducting  
service at  
Ousseltia,  
North Africa**



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near us. We thought at first they were our own, going over our heads—until some struck near by. I called to my crew and said, "They mean us!" We made a hasty, but strategic, withdrawal, and ran to get out of their range. I told Chaplain Carper that I had heard one shell twice; once when it passed me and again when I passed it. At one point, the crater where the shell exploded was still smoking as I passed it (in high.)

Again the Lord was with us, for the shells that fell near were of the armor-piercing type, while the ones that were out of range were high explosive. None of us suffered any casualties, but Chaplain Carper lost his wallet with \$86.00 and valuable papers in it. A little later as we were checking up on our dead and those missing in action, we visited another cemetery and remarked about the wallet. The sergeant in charge replied that another chaplain had found a wallet and turned it in. They were waiting for the owner's body to be found. I pointed to the Chaplain and said, "Here comes the body." The chaplain identified his wallet and was able to claim it personally. The chaplain again felt the Lord was with him and declared it paid to live right.



## *Chapter Six*

### *Unusual Experiences*

One officer from my regiment was explaining to me while we were in the Station Hospital in North Africa, how, in the final phases of the operations in North Africa, his Commanding Officer requested him to take his Company and capture a for near Bizerte. This officer was from Springdale, Arkansas, I believe, and in an infantry unit. He decided that he would take a sergeant along with him. They hopped in a peep to make a reconnaissance to see just how strong a force was needed to accomplish their mission. Upon reaching the fort without event, they noticed the gate slightly ajar, and proceeded to walk in, only to discover they were in the midst of about three-hundred armed enemy soldiers. They just looked at each other. Finally, one Italian soldier ventured the remark to the lieutenant, "I speak a little English," to which the lieutenant replied, "Ask your Commanding Officer if he is ready to go"; this he did. There was a heated discussion of which the lieutenant or his sergeant could not understand one word, and the situation was growing more tense. He told me that he would have cleared out if he had dared because he was "scared to death." Finally, the interpreter returned and said, "The Commandant wishes to know if he can take his Staff Car," to which the lieutenant replied, "Yes." Again he asked if he might take

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his truck along to carry the officers' baggage, to which the lieutenant replied "Okay." The lieutenant then asked that the Commandant have his men stack their rifles and get into formation. He promptly proceeded to do so. The lieutenant then walked into the office of the Commandant in the fort, and seeing some large field glasses, immediately put them around his neck. At this the officer scowled; however, he could not back up now, so he walked over to the corner of the room and picked up a sword, which he thought the major would be pleased to have as a souvenir. Then, taking his place with his sergeant in his peep, he led the procession, followed by the officers in the staff car, then the truck with the baggage, and on foot, the soldiers bringing up the rear. When he reached the major, who stood amazed, he said, "Here are your prisoners, Sir." To this the major replied, "You didn't go up there and get them alone, did you? I intended for you to take your company." Then the lieutenant explained how it all happened.

Chaplain Carper and myself had been looking the tank battle field over near Mateur for Lieutenant Warner, who was missing. We found one of his gloves near his tank which had been disabled, but no Lieutenant Warner. Later on, this same lieutenant turned up; he had been captured but was able, through a ruse one night, to surprise the enemy. With his hand in his pocket as though he had a gun, he held up four German officers. He took the Luger pistol from one of them and

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used it instead of his hand to cover them. When the officer noted the deception he was very angry. He said he had paid around \$80.00 for the gun, and did not think the American had played fair. The lieutenant, along with the sergeant who had accompanied him, marched the enemy out to the road, commandeered a truck, and brought the entire group back to his line.

I also hunted for Lieutenant Warner, only to be told that he was missing. While I was looking for his body, I stopped, in company with his battalion chaplain, John Carper, at his headquarters near Bizerte. While I was there, the Lieutenant walked in with a smile on his face. I said "Lieutenant, you have worried me to death, where have you been?" He replied, "I was ten miles on my way to Italy when a flying fortress came over and started dropping eggs, and forced us to return to Tunisia. Upon arrival, I was informed by the officers of the ship that they were now our prisoners. Other officers were also on this ship as well as other ships that were forced back, and they became the captors instead of the captives, much to their genuine satisfaction." This situation could be repeated over, and over, but I wanted to give you an inkling of some of the uncomfortable situations in which officers and men sometimes find themselves; also to prove to your satisfaction that our men have courage and determination even when the odds are against them. This is the type of men that are today assuring your continued freedom and happiness of tomorrow. They have

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the faith of their forefathers and the courage of the crusaders of old, and with encouragement at home as well as unity they will come through victoriously.

### THE LORD TAKES OVER

From the moment we embarked from our port in the United States, and as we sailed over the high seas to Ireland, England and the Invasion of North Africa, we were made conscious of our own insignificance; and most of us resigned our fate into the hands of Almighty God. There were many times when the writer personally added his prayers to those of the men, in seeking God's protection during the critical days and travel on the high seas and in the combat areas.

It was not uncommon to have officers and men tell the chaplain that they had been doing considerable praying. Many of them brought letters from their pastors and loved ones and read extracts stating that they were being remembered in prayer back home. This seemed to make the men feel more courageous and more determined in their desire to get the war over as soon as possible and return to their normal pursuits of life and happiness, for which they were fighting.

Not alone was this situation real among Combat Command "B", but throughout the First Armored Division, and, I am sure, among other branches and services as well.

One pilot, in a letter to his parents, recently stated that when D-day came that the Lord took

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over. This was my own personal experience and the experience of many men who traveled on roads or across mine fields, or traveled alone on strange roads at night, or even in convoy with dust so thick that it was impossible to see the vehicle directly in front of you; or perhaps you were so fatigued that in driving you imagined objects were ahead which were not. The pilot referred to in this paragraph states in his words: "When I took off on D-day and we were assaulting the beach heads, I can't quite describe my feelings except that I was terribly afraid. Yet, I was very calm, and I prayed, and I knew you were praying for me too, and that helped. Some of my buddies were killed, and the shelling from the large guns of the battleship sounded awful, and while I watched tanks and supplies move in it made me feel good to see them.

"The Nazis are a sorry looking lot but they are healthy looking and certainly do not look as though they are suffering from malnutrition. I am proud of the men in my outfit and I know that from now on it will be a lot safer. Don't worry, we have the men and the goods to lick the Nazis off the face of the earth.

"I am feeling fine now, all rested up, no scratches even. So you see our prayers have been answered. I know I will come through O.K., but if anything ever should happen keep the old chin up, and keep looking ahead always. I am ready to go back and shall always try to do my part."

That is the spirit of American Youth. They are



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willing to make sacrifices for those they love just as our Lord was willing to make sacrifices for mankind.

A mother of one of the former young pilots informed me that among the personal things of her son sent to her by the War Department, in one corner of the case of his sun glasses she found a note which read thus:

"Mother, you may find this note some day, and if you should, remember that if anything happens to me that I died in the work I enjoyed most and was happiest in. Mother, please do not grieve yourself but rather console yourself in the fact that I am happy. Try to enjoy the remainder of your life as best you can and have no regrets, for you have been a wonderful Mother, and—I love you, Jim."

These instances referred to are only a few of the many similar ones throughout the services and throughout the world. They reveal the true spirit of American youth and integrity, on which the future America must depend. I personally have no doubt as to their abilities to carry on and reflect credit upon their forefathers. For just as the Lord was with Joshua in the ages gone, and gave him courage to defeat his enemies, so today with our youth, wherever they may be, the Lord is taking over, and with him on our side there can be only one ultimate end.

Dr. Earl N. Griggs of Dayton, Ohio, in an article published in the Religious Telescope, headed "\$150.00 for Prayers, Is It Worth It?" describes a

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soldier in a torn, bloody uniform, sweltering in the steaming heat of a tropical jungle, with planes, tanks and trucks in the background, while on his knee he is writing to his pastor back home. "Dear Pastor: Out here (Guadalcanal) everybody tries to pray. It is not easy, for some of us never learned how very well. Enclosed is a Postal Order for \$150.00. Please use it in the church to teach boys and girls how to pray." This, too, describes the soldier's attitude toward prayer, for this soldier's sentiments are those of many more G.I.'s as well as officers, and of course apply to other armed forces as well.

Chaplains in the army did much to teach men how to pray. Many have expressed their thankfulness that as little children they were taught how to pray and to say, "Our Father." I believe that this soldier really valued prayer and realized for the first time the importance of prayer and wanted somehow to make it easier for others to know how to pray when they find themselves in a situation which warrants "special prayers." He wanted, no doubt, that this money be used in the Sunday schools, or in such a manner that would encourage boys and girls to learn to pray while they are yet young. I believe that most soldiers genuinely believe in prayer as a means of communication with God and as an outlet for their fears by casting their burden upon him and asking his divine protection upon them.

## *Chapter Seven*

### *American Missionaries*

Whether in Ireland where the flowers seem to be larger, more beautiful and more plentiful than anywhere else in the world, or in North Africa, where the poppies grow wild over acres of battle scarred lands, or in Scotland where the bonnie lassies live on the beautiful blue grass hills of Loch Lomond, Americans, wherever stationed, are truly missionaries to the extent that they spread good will and make new friends, which is one of the Great Commandments.

Those who are outstanding in the writer's memory in foreign lands are Lieutenant and Mrs. Eric Brown, the former of the Fleet Air Arm Service, from Belfast, North Ireland. The Lieutenant received the Distinguished Service Cross and the M.B.E. from King George of England at Buckingham Palace for bravery and skill in action against heavy and sustained enemy attack. In North Africa, Captain Calomel of the French Air Force, who received the Croix de Guerre for bravery and participation in air raids over Germany; the Vernons of Beja, the Russells of Bone; and Mr. and Mrs. Henri Julianne of Rabat.

Besides the American soldiers, as missionaries throughout the world, the medical officers and corps men are making a great contribution toward relieving distress among the injured and sick in the countries and towns liberated. The real serv-

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ants of humanity, from the soldier's point of view, are the unsung heroes of the Nurses' Corps. Many of them are working shorthanded, long hours, and serving several wards, with insufficient rest and assistance. They are taking the place of mothers, wives, sweethearts and friends, all combined in one personage. They are known by the soldiers as "Angels of Mercy." Regardless of dangers, hardships, or private inconveniences, the nurses carry on.

I have seen some offered the opportunity of moving back to the rear where they could replace their coveralls with white uniforms, but who asked to be allowed to remain nearer the front where they felt they could be of greater service to the wounded and dying. My hat is off to these brave nurses. May God Bless Them!

While I never will make a sailor, because I get seasick every time I get on a boat, my hat is off to men of the navy for their marvelous performances in the convoys for which they were responsible in getting the men to the scene of action. My hat is off also to the "Knights of the Air," for they provided an umbrella of security for the crusaders of the ground in their tanks, whether they were Marines, Seabees, Engineers, Doughboys, Tank Men, or members of some other branch of the ground forces.

In fact, I am convinced that it was only through the co-ordination and co-operation that we had between these forces, and the loyalty within themselves toward each other that we were enabled to

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continue a successful pursuit of the war in all spheres.

My hat is off to the war correspondents, such as Hal Boyle, Ernie Pyle, Don Whitehead, and Dave Divine, who, regardless of their personal comfort, accompanied the men on various missions to furnish firsthand facts to the folks back home. In fact, many times the men listened to radio news on their tank radios in order to learn what the big picture was to date in which they were playing their part.

Upon one occasion, I was near Ousseltia, North Africa, reading a manuscript that Hal Boyle had submitted when the reading was interrupted. Mr. Boyle and I along with others, speedily took our positions under wagons in an implement shed to avoid the strafing of enemy planes, which scored a direct hit and destroyed a truck within our view.

Upon another occasion it was my privilege to share in a Kush-cush Arab dinner, given in honor of Brigadier General Robinett (on my birthday). It was raining and Mr. Boyle and I were able to spend the night together on our bunks, being sheltered in a bomb-torn town in one of the few buildings remaining intact (the mayor's home). This was not for long, for we had to go out again and carry on; however, not before church services were held for the Command Headquarters Group.

I know of one war correspondent who was wounded in North Africa. He was told he would be awarded a Purple Heart if he would wear it where he was wounded, which happened to be

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part of his rear echelon. I haven't seen him since so I do not know if he is wearing this decoration or not.

### REMINISCENCES

As I reflect upon the past there are little things which at the time that they happened seemed relatively unimportant, but which to others would be quite interesting.

The Five-and-Ten Cent stores in Ireland and England are called the 3-d and 6-d stores, d standing for pence. One shilling is equivalent to about 20 cents of American money, and one franc is equivalent to about 2 cents of American money. Even in Oran, North Africa, as well as in Scotland, there are Five-and-Ten-Cent stores or their equivalent.

People in Ireland traveled on the left side of the road. It was rather awkward and hard to get accustomed to such travel at first. The door knobs in the homes were at the center of the door instead of where we usually see them. Gasoline was called petrol, and it was not an uncommon sight to see automobiles with big balloons filled with gas moored to the top of their vehicles. These balloons would enable a car to travel about twenty miles on one filling. In North Africa, however, the custom was to drive on the right side of the road so we had to learn how to drive again. Many of the French vehicles, including Fords, were operated by coke stove attachments to the side of cars. I saw one Frenchman who had apparently run out of coke, just poking in pieces of ordinary pine wood

## AMERICAN MISSIONARIES

that he had picked up from the road. Gasoline there was about fifty cents a gallon.

Major-General Fredendahl played an important part in the early negotiations of Oran, incidental to its capitulation, as did Major General Lunsford Oliver, Brigadier General P. M. Robinett, and Lieutenant Colonel (Daddy Rabbit) John Todd, as well as others. I do not know that there were many tense moments, but never did I see Americans shirking their responsibilities or tasks. Yes, the men in Ireland were given entertainment, but in North Africa, in the combat areas, most of it was produced by themselves and the band, or by group singing, including the song, "Those 88's Are Breaking Up That Old Gang of Mine."

### THOSE EIGHTY EIGHTS

Words by Lt. Fred Fink and M. G. Sneath

Oh! there's no one on the Skyline—  
That's a pretty certain sign  
Those 88's are breaking up  
That old gang of mine.

\* \* \*

They are all down digging foxholes,  
Digging deeper all the time—  
Those 88's are breaking up  
That old gang of mine.

\* \* \*

There goes Jack, there goes Jim  
Into a slit trench; when  
Now and then we meet again,  
That old gang of mine.

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

Gee, I get that lonesome feeling  
When I hear that shrapnel whine—  
Those 88's are breaking up  
That old gang of mine.

They would also recite the poem of Dirty Gertie. The "G.I.'s" story of Dirty Gertie from Bizerte, as given to me, is that a soldier found Gertie in a lingerie shop, lying on her side, unclad. This soldier with others, rescued the wax dummy from the window, christened her "Dirty Gertie", and I believe placed a drape around her, and gently put her in their Peep. For a couple of days thereafter Dirty Gertie rode like a queen through the streets of Bizerte. The Commanding Officer put a stop to it, but not before she had inspired an unknown song writer to concoct another song for World War II.

I never did see Gertie so I can only pass on the story that was most common among the soldiers over there.

Yes, we had entertainment, impromptu shows by the men and, especially, by the band of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment, as well as other bands, including that of the First Armored Regiment. These put on shows for the men even near the front lines where no other entertainment was possible.

In Ireland and in the rear areas of North Africa, the U.S.O., Red Cross and other organizations entertained the men in a marvelous manner. However, it is surprising what talent can be brought out when men are left to their own initiative.



## AMERICAN MISSIONARIES

Among all the sights which I recall, one made a special impression upon me at Maknassy where General Robinett stood upon a little djebel and, with his field glasses, for hours kept his eyes trained on enemy positions and carried on the administration of his headquarters at the same time. It seemed as though there was no end to his tenacity and endurance. He was concerned about accomplishing his mission successfully with the least loss of time and men possible. While his orders many times were sharp and crisp, due to the stress of battle, they were always clear and judiciously given. Some of his associates were Lieutenant Colonel Russell, Major Long, Major Smart, Major Phillipsborn, Captain Frankel, Captain Barrow, Major Samuels, Major Cook, and for awhile Captain Butts and Captain Allison, as well as Lieutenant McCreavy, Lieutenant Colonel Howze, Lieutenant Colonel Gardner, and many others. He was able to carry out his missions to his complete personal satisfaction. There never was a more loyal group associated than those of Combat Command "B".

Upon one occasion I managed to buy a retired rooster from a French farmer in North Africa for \$2.00. I was invited to the home of Mrs. Vernon in Beja, who permitted me and my assistant to come into her home and attempt to fry the rooster. I boiled it for several hours and then tried to fry it, and, using powdered milk from America, tried to make milk gravy. We cluttered up all the pans in the kitchen, but this rooster

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

did not turn out quite as satisfactory as some (considerably younger in age) I had fried back in the states. But with the supplemental food of the Vernons, we sat down to one of the best meals we ever had in North Africa.

Upon one occasion, during a heavy rain, I was hailed by some soldiers along the road who said, "Chaplain, how about stopping for dinner with us." I replied that I must move on, but they explained that they were having fried chicken, southern style. They had traded with the Arabs for the chickens. After being furnished with definite proof of this assertion, I immediately dismounted from my peep, waded through mud to where they were and remained through the process of cooking the chicken and enjoyed the additional fellowship of the men. This experience was duplicated a few times upon other occasions much to the chaplain's satisfaction.

We supplemented our "C" rations with some things for which we could trade with the Arabs, such as eggs, tangerines, dates and chickens. One time I was told where I could find about ten chickens that had been abandoned, but upon investigation I learned that some of the men had the same idea before I had it. They had found the chickens so lousy that they regretted capturing them, so I decided I would forego the chicken this time, rather than be a lousy chaplain.

My clerk and I were invited to a turkey dinner in a French home about six miles from the German lines. A gentlemen of Jewish parentage,



**Ousseltia church and cemetery, North Africa**



**Church bombed by Germans, Beja, North Africa**



**Cemetery  
established by  
Chaplain  
Abbott,  
Combat  
Command "B,"  
Mateur,  
North Africa**



**Chaplain  
Abbott  
preaching  
while  
bombs burst  
near by**



**French Women  
decorating graves  
of American  
soldiers at  
Mateur—  
Chaplains Abbott  
and Carper  
Standing near**



## AMERICAN MISSIONARIES

who was much disturbed, fearing the Germans might move in, was being entertained there (small wonder!). After a sumptuous meal, we traveled on under cover of darkness and suddenly were surrounded by a group of soldiers, with guns, who challenged us in the French tongue. I called out that I was an American and they came closer and I gave a sigh of relief as I recognized them as dark native French soldiers. They satisfied themselves that I was not German and directed us to the main road on which we traveled to our headquarters.

One day on the highway I saw a truck without occupant, and with an American rifle leaning against it. I looked around for the driver and found him about a quarter of a mile away, asleep alongside the hedge. I took the gun, approached him, and pointing it at him, awakened him and said, "I am a German and am going to kill you with your own rifle." Of course, this was only to impress the soldier with his mistake in leaving his rifle. He informed me that he had been instructed to leave his truck between the hours of 8:00 and 9:30, inasmuch as the enemy had been dropping bombs and strafing them during that period, on this particular highway leading to Medjez el Bab. His truck was loaded with ammunition; but after having driven all night, he was too sleepy and tired to remember his gun. He assured me that if I would not report this instance it would never happen again. On many other occasions the chaplain "saved the day" for both officers and men, but

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at the same time he did not feel that he had violated any trust because they were minor incidents and served to create greater vigilance thereafter.

I recall on one occasion, when we were burying the dead at Medjez el Bab cemetery, witnessing fourteen planes, half German and half American, in dog fights. We stuck close to the solid cement walls surrounding the cemetery to avoid being hit as they zoomed up and down, spitting at one another with bullets. Suddenly, one would see what appeared to be one of the planes coming down in smoke only to zoom back up again and take a new position. This continued for about twenty minutes when all of the planes, apparently running out of gas, suddenly vanished from the skies without any visual plane casualties on either side. On our return from the cemetery Warrant Officer "Boots" Hoffman decided he would remove the blockade chain that was across the road in our path. I suggested that he wait for the French guard, who was no doubt in the vicinity. But he jumped from the peep and proceeded to do this little job himself, until a bullet sang over his head. He stopped in his tracks and did a neat "about face" having decided to let the French look after their own security after all, which they were apparently quite capable of doing. The French guard removed the chain, gave me a salute, and we passed on.

It seemed that my assistant and I, as well as Chaplains Carper and Doyle, soon became very

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efficient in grave registration work and could locate bodies of the dead quite easily. Upon one occasion we knew there was a body somewhere because of the strong odor which was evident as we drove along the road, indicating that this body had been dead several days. Since it was dark, we continued on to our headquarters and, before reaching our destination, were fired upon twice by snipers or disgruntled Arabs who were hidden in buildings near La Senia. The next morning we returned to the place where we thought there should be a body and we discovered a dead mule, which had been killed in the initial operations. We were too busy to include burial of animals in our schedule, and left the mule for the French Sanitary Corps to dispose of.

I could speak some French and, in the town of La Senia, managed through some Spanish people to bargain for some chickens and have them barbecued, this unusual delicacy was enjoyed by the entire burial detail.

We usually tried to shave every day, for our own morale, but under the pressure of activities this was delayed for seventy-two hours one time. Having had no sleep and having been constantly on the go, I looked like an applicant for the "House of David." We were all a hard, rugged looking bunch of individuals. Our hearts were of gold, though, as we shared our rations, "*bon bons*" and chewing gum with the ragged and naked Arab children as well as with the French children who were usually clean and dressed neatly, in marked

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

contrast. As we traveled through villages in convoys, we would hear the words "Hi, Joe!", "O.K.!" etc., giving the "V" sign with the fingers and shouting "*Vive La France*," "*Vive La Americans*," "*Comrades*", and in a few instances some were greeted with a kiss on the cheek.

On Thanksgiving Day as we were moving rapidly across North Africa to the front lines, I happened to think that we did not have any turkey, so I started out looking around and located a French home near by. You can imagine my surprise when I saw an electric refrigerator in the kitchen with the name Frigidaire, Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A. on its front. They also had freezer boxes of the same type, in which to keep the milk and meats cool.

I returned to the bivouac area and several of the men pitched in with "donations" and I was able to buy three turkeys. I returned just in time to join the tail end of the convoy, as camp had been broken and the men had started on. I gave the turkeys to the kitchen crew and took my proper place in the convoy. It was a cold, chilly night, with snow on the tops of the mountains. We shivered as we drove along. The next day, I saw Lieutenant Buckingham eating a turkey leg as he rode the column and he informed me that the kitchen crew had cooked the turkeys and were having a grand feast en route (and the rest of us were eating "C" rations). I immediately turned my little peep about, had my driver drive as close to the kitchen truck as possible while I crawled



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out on the radiator hood and requested a drum stick for myself and two assistants, who were with me. They complied with my request, and, while it was a day late for Thanksgiving, we were thankful just as well. I am thinking, however, that all who pitched in to buy the turkeys did not get to enjoy them, for, on the move, it was impossible to do much about it.

Of course, the troops in the rear and in the non-combatant areas were partaking of the usual Thanksgiving feeds. I never heard a complaint from any of our men at any time so long as we were pursuing the enemy. A soldier who doesn't gripe is considered ill. We had a pretty healthy group in our Command.

Upon another occasion, I remember visiting Lieutenant Colonel Ringsok, who was in command of a battalion of the Sixth Infantry. I asked him where he was sleeping, and he pointed to a pup tent. I asked, "How does it happen that you do not sleep in your C. P. tent?" He replied, "The men do not have C. P. tents. They treat me like a baby. They even come to my pup tent at night and tuck me in!" He said that when they were about to go into the first battle, the sergeants grouped around him and informed him that he did not need to expose himself to danger, that they would carry out the mission if he would give them the order. To this he replied, "I'll give you the orders all right, but I'll be right in the middle of it." There he was always to be found, directing his men personally, disregarding danger. He has

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been wounded several times and has been awarded many decorations for his valor and leadership under fire. It is with pleasant memories that I recall his visiting men in the hospital in North Africa. He was a young man of about twenty-eight years of age, with mature judgment and qualities of military leadership. On his birthday, near Kasserine Pass, we celebrated both it and the arrival of his son, whom he had never seen, using the band and putting on quite a show for the men, and reading a letter from the commanding general. This moved the Colonel very much and he showed his gratitude for this consideration even among battle conditions.

It was quite a thrill to visit Tunis following its liberation. While Bizerte was entirely in ruins, Tunis had been spared, except around the areas of the docks, where could be seen many sunken ships which had attempted to escape. French people waved from their apartments and threw kisses to the troops, many of them waving American flags as well as French flags.

I saw General Von Arnim and many other high ranking German officers dressed in resplendent uniforms as they made their journey to the rear and to war prison camps. I saw the British Tommies as they came along and received plaudits of the populace. The British Tommies had proved themselves to be great fighters, and everything moved in their path as they swept forth to victory and joined the Americans in eliminating the enemy from North Africa.

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Along the road sometimes could be heard the calls of the combat soldiers, "Who won the war?" and the reply would be, "The M.P.'s". However, this was said in jest, for the M.P.'s did an outstanding job, as did the engineers, the air corps, the navy, and every other service that participated in these wide scale operations. The Germans seemed to have gone into a panic for they surrendered by the thousands. The roads were covered with broken rifles, discarded supplies, munitions, and antiquated vehicles. There was no doubt but our material for the most part was far superior to theirs. The German 88's was their most dreaded demoralizer.

It was a pitiful sight, and one that I shall not soon forget, to see the natives returning to what was left of their homes and trying to keep up their morale and begin anew. Somehow it thrilled us to feel that we had a part in making it possible for them to return to what they knew only as home. Every place Americans went they were received with graciousness, respect and admiration. It was with deep pride that in combat they wore a little American flag sewed on their left sleeve.

I have endeavored to give you sketches from my memory that will enable you to picture in a small way some of the unusual experiences which I shared along with many others, in the hope that you will be able to appreciate the price that has been paid in order that we might all continue to be able to sing, "In the land of the free and the home of the brave."

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

Corporal Whipple and I had occasion to go to the rear, checking up on mail and delivering personal effects to the men in the hospitals as well as distributing certain canteen supplies. As we stopped out in the country to prepare our "C" rations and make them a little more palatable, a young Arab girl about sixteen years of age, with beautiful white teeth, her face uncovered, approached us and exclaimed, "Americans, Arabs, Camrades." Her dark eyes glistened in contrast with her olive complexion. She held out her hand and begged, "Souvenir, Monsieur." I responded by giving her some American chewing gum. I then held out my hand and exclaimed "Souvenir, Mademoiselle," to which she held her hands open in a gesture of resignation, indicating she had nothing. I pointed to a little broach, an Arab pin, which she promptly unpinned and gave to me. I sent it home, but later felt a little mean in taking apparently the only piece of jewelry she had. She then went on to say, (she had learned some English) "Americans Good!" (in French pronounced "Bon"). At this time we had at least sixty Arabs watching us eat our noon rations and they waited for anything that we might give them. As we took off again down the road, they all waved good-by and the little Arab girl threw us a kiss. She had apparently learned this from Americans who had been along before and from whom also she had picked up bits of English from her conversations with them.

Movies and pictures that we see show only the

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picturesque view of the scenes that are most interesting in North Africa. They tell only half the true story, for many of the Arabs live in squalor, go in rags, and beg for almost everything they get. However, it is interesting to note here that if one makes a gift to an Arab first, he will respond with even a greater gift in return; that is in so far as he is able to do so. I was amused one time when I tried to trade for eggs with a group of Arabs. They informed me that they had no more. As one young Arab youth stepped back an egg which had been hidden in the folds of his robe fell to the ground and crushed. This was a big joke on the young Arab and all the others in the group began kidding him and chiding him about it. He had no explanation except to show his white teeth, smiling.

The lower class furnish the most expert thieves imaginable. Many times in the bivouac areas they were able to make off with various items after the Americans had shown a friendly interest in them. It was necessary, in most cases, to exclude them from trading within the areas.

I know of no instances where American bodies or graves were molested by anyone. This was not true, however, concerning the German dead. In many instances Arabs had removed their shoes and parts of their clothing before the burial parties reached them.

Americans in the front regarded the British soldier as their equal in fighting ability and as a good sport. This attitude was reversed on the

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part of the British. One day in a hospital a British sergeant remarked to me, "We have had to change our minds considerably about you blokes. We find your men to be good fighters and good sports." The same day an American sergeant said to me, "Chaplain, we have had to change our minds about the British Tommies, for we find them to be excellent fighters as well as good sports."

Unless you know what it is to practice L.C.T. landings, climbing over the boat sides with rope ladders in the inky darkness of the night and with only the mirky waters below; unless you know what it is to sleep in pup tents with water running in rivulets, or slushing through the mud, or to be exposed to the elements of cold, rain, sleet, and to ride while soaked to the skin for hours; unless you know what it is to hover down at the bottom of a boat awaiting the unknown in making a landing, with shells falling dangerously near you; unless you know what it is to feel afraid and to wonder how soon you are going to shake hands with St. Peter when seeing the sky yellow from shell fire; unless you know what it is to step out with the water up to your neck with a full pack, too heavy to swim in (if you were a good swimmer), and not knowing whether the water is over your head or not, you cannot fully appreciate the comforts and security of your homes in America. Unless you know what it is to make a trench big enough to conceal your body from enemy shell fire, every time you stop for any period of time; unless you know what it is to travel during the night

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with sniper shells whistling past your ears, and all the time wondering if it has your name inscribed on the shell; unless you know what it is to witness your buddies dying and being killed, it is almost impossible for you to conceive the actual hardships that war necessitates.

Should you ever find yourself lying down in a slit-trench with guns barking overhead, and with nothing to eat but "C" rations, you will know something of the experiences we had in Tunisia.

Guide-books had been written which were very interesting and which gave one an inkling of what to expect.

Those who realized the full significance of this war, gave until it hurt—buying bonds and making possible the necessary supplies for carrying out its speedy culmination.

I spoke to a woman in Chicago who said, after talking to me for a while that she had planned on refurnishing her home and building up her wardrobe but finally decided to invest the money in bonds and wait until after the war for the other things.

I am sure you will agree with me that no sacrifice was too great which enabled our soldiers to accomplish their mission victoriously and return to the land they love.

Try to be patient with them. If they gather around and celebrate a little noisily, try to remember that they have gone through hell for you. And should you hear them singing on the street, "Bless Em All", "Dirty Girtie", "Mademoiselle

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

from Armentiers", "When I get Back to the Old U.S.A.", "Those 88's are Breaking Up That Old Gang of Mine", or one of the other many silly ditties which they learned while over there, try to overlook it and exercise a degree of patience toward these true veterans and crusaders of World War II.



## *Chapter Eight*

### *Identification and Burial of the Dead*

To you parents, wives, and sweethearts, as well as to the clergy at home, there are questions on your mind regarding the burial of the dead, which I shall attempt to clarify in this chapter. For your information and comfort let me begin by saying that our American dead were properly cared for by the chaplains and given full burial honors as far as the situation permitted them to do so. Sometimes during the pressure of battle conditions it was necessary to abbreviate the services somewhat, but in every case a burial service was held by the chaplain.

The chaplain's task was by no means an easy one, especially concerning the burial of the dead. It was necessary that he know the methods and procedure connected with Graves Registration Services. A soldier was buried in a single grave with regulation depth, which was between four and five feet. Reports were made of the soldier buried, on either side, in order to make sure of no mistake in case of the necessity of reburial in the future.

Usually the soldiers were buried in temporary cemeteries near the places where they fell, and later removed for more permanent burial in gov-

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

ernment-owned, centralized cemeteries. It is possible that, in many cases, as was the case after the last war, that a number of these bodies will be returned to America at the request of their relatives. Pilgrimages also may be arranged for those who elect to leave their loved ones in the government cemeteries overseas.

It was my privilege as Graves' Registration Officer for Combat Command "B" to establish several of these front-line, temporary cemeteries. In emergencies, in a theater of operation the chaplain often was called upon to serve as Graves' Registration Officer for his unit. For that reason familiarized himself (as did other officers in his unit) with all the current regulations and directives in that connection in order that he might serve or advise his unit commanders intelligently and receive all possible assistance from the officers of the command.

The Graves' Registration Service of the Quartermaster Corps cares for the problems created by death. The policies of Graves' Registration Service and the responsibility for the supervision of burials are the tasks of an officer made responsible to the commanding general in each theater of operations.

The organization of the Quartermaster Graves' Registration Company is shown in the following diagram which illustrates how the company is related to the organization it serves:

## IDENTIFICATION AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD

**QUARTERMASTER GRAVES REGISTRATION COMPANY**  
*(serves a corps of three divisions)*

**Company Headquarters**

**Four Platoons**  
*(one per combat division)*

**Three Sections Per Platoon**  
*(One per regiment. Two for foot troops; one for motorized troops. A section may also serve for a separate battalion or an organic battalion within a regiment.)*

Each platoon is commanded by a commissioned officer, who is assisted by a staff sergeant (topographic draftsman.) Each section has a chief of section (sergeant), a record clerk (private), four laborers (privates), and one attached medical (sergeant).

The platoon commander will, under general instructions from the company commander, serve under the commanding general of the division in the sector to which he is assigned. His immediate superior, insofar as administrative details are concerned, is the division quartermaster. He records the graves of the fallen; properly buries the fallen and carefully registers on maps the place of isolated burials and cemeteries.

The objectives of the service in the theater of operations are to:

(1) See that all bodies marked killed in action are accurately identified.

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(2) Observe all sanitary precautions.

(3) Send through channels all pertinent information to the end that each grave will be correctly recorded in the Graves' Registration Office, Washington, D. C.

(4) Place each body (with appropriate military honor and religious ceremony) in a grave which shall be correctly marked.

(5) Carry out its work so as to preserve both troop and civilian morale.

The greatest task of Graves' Registration Service is the proper identification of the dead. When identification tags are not found on the body, the section in charge must find comrades to identify the body, search for identifying materials, or use fingerprinting equipment. Tooth charts and dentures are further means of identification. When a body be buried unidentified, the following procedure is used:

(1) A report of all that has been done to identify it is written out.

(2) A record is made of any characteristics such as scars or birthmarks that might lead to future identification.

(3) The report and record are put in a bottle and placed securely in the soil covering the grave and in view of those who will follow to take up the task of identification.

Some useful rules followed by all members of the armed forces to make identification possible are:

(1) Wear the issue identification at all times.



**Memorial Service, May 11, 1943, Thirteenth Armored Regiment, Mateur, N. A.**



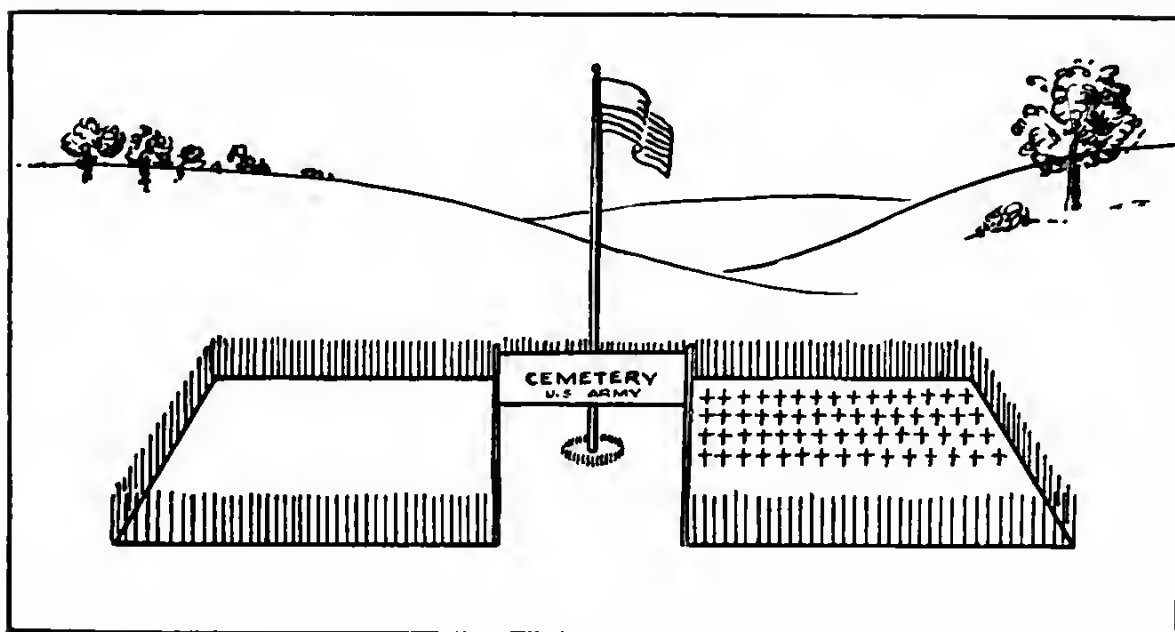
**Honors to dead of First Armored Division, May, 1943, Mateur, North Africa**



**Chaplain Abbott holding services near Medjez El Bab, North Africa**



# CEMETERY



## PLAN

**A**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	13		←	9	8	
15	16		→			

**B**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	13	←		9	8	
15			→			

**C**

1	2	3	4	5	
					←

**D**

1	2	3	4		
					←

**E**

1	2	3			
					←

**F** SECTION FOR  
ENEMY DEAD

1	2	3			
					←

## IDENTIFICATION AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD

(2) Correct spelling, the use of the Army Serial Number, efficient typing, and legible handwriting must be employed in all reports and records both at home and abroad.

(3) Keep your own personal records up to date and proofread them for possible errors. Be extra careful when recording and transcribing the records of other personnel; be on the alert for any possible error.

In combat it is very probable that each battalion will be asked to furnish its own graves' registration section to supplement the work of the quartermaster section.

I can assure you that our men were not buried in isolated graves, but in beautiful locations with military honors. Some cemeteries were located in Arzew, Oran, Algiers, Sbeitla, Beja, Tabessa, Medjez el Bab, and Mateur, as well as in many other places. The last cemetery I established which consisted of forty-eight (48) graves, was at Mateur in a city park, most of the dead being former members of the Thirteenth Armored Regiment. This cemetery had white gravel walks between the graves, a flag pole, a marble memorial table resting on a cement base with a cross directly over. It was also fenced with aluminum stakes surrounded by red, white, and blue wire, all furnished from salvaged enemy material.

In some instances the towns paid for the services of Arabs to dig the graves; prisoners of war also volunteered for this service. Sometimes local prisoners were loaned by the police to us,

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

but we assumed full responsibility for them; still in other instances the chaplains hired local people to care for the graves.

Following the victory in North Africa, memorial services were held in which the entire Thirteenth Armored Regiment participated, including the Commanding Officer, Colonel Chauncey Benson, together with the Regimental Band and colors. This was an impressive sight. Many of the newly-liberated French people attended.

After the memorial services, the band withdrew to another section of the park and played various selections. I shall never forget the expression on the faces of the local French populace as they played the French Marseillaise. Tears were streaming down their faces in gratitude for being liberated and for being able to hear again their own National Anthem on their own free soil.

Identification of the dead in many instances was quite difficult, but I assure you that every effort was made, and is being made, to ascertain the identity of each soldier. His identification tags, which he was required to wear at all times, were his main means of identification; one tag was buried with the body, and the other attached to the marker over his grave. In case of enemy dead, one of his tags was buried with the body and the other forwarded with his personal effects to the intelligence section of the army and eventually to his relatives. Finger prints were taken when possible, but in the absence of tags or finger prints other means of identification were employed.



## IDENTIFICATION AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD

On one occasion I traveled six hundred miles to verify identification of the dead through survivors of a plane crash. Six of the remaining crew of ten had been evacuated to a hospital in the rear. Through these men I was able to identify the four men who had given their lives in defense of their country. On another occasion a soldier was found dead in a cave. He had been captured by the Germans, who left no means of identification on him; however, this officer, as he proved to be, had given his wallet to his buddies who also had been captured, and, after being assured by the officer captors that he would be well taken care of, they continued on and later escaped. Some time after this we were led to this cave by these same men, and positive identification was made.

No effort was spared to identify properly our American dead, and parents and others can have full confidence in the men who were charged with this responsibility, as they all were conscientious in performance of this particular duty, knowing that they were the only ones that could represent the parents, wives and sweethearts back home.

Upon one occasion I found the identification tags of an American officer (whom I had buried a few days previous, and whom I was able to identify personally) in the pocket of a dead German soldier; apparently he was keeping them for souvenirs.

It might be interesting to note that no time was lost after a battle engagement in recovering the bodies of our American dead; usually they were

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

buried the same day they were killed. On one occasion, two soldiers were killed by snipers during the night just one half mile from the established cemetery and buried a few hours later.

While I write and recall some of my dramatic experiences, I am impressed most by the courage, the valor and humor of our American soldiers. Each soldier that I see that has paid his all, as I stand reverently at his grave, I think of the message he would have me give to the folks back home. That message is this, that any sacrifice they might have to make even unto death, is inconsequential compared to their love for their country, and loved ones, whom they hope will never suffer as the people in the war-torn countries they have visited. I am sure their desire was for unconditional surrender as proclaimed by the Commander-in-chief, President Roosevelt, and our allies, in order to prevent a recurrence of such horrible catastrophes in the future.

Many times Chaplain Carper or Chaplain Doyle, my assistants, and I have toured the hills and traveled through mine-infested fields, which the engineers had not yet reached, to recover the bodies of our men. Oftimes we worked by the light of the moon, and frequently for periods as long as twenty hours in one day, living mostly on canned "C" rations, of which we always had a plentiful supply.

Sometimes the cemeteries were located very close to the front, because we were pushing on so rapidly, and thus we were subject to strafing and

## IDENTIFICATION AND BURIAL OF THE DEAD

enemy bombs. Upon occasions such as these we would either jump in a vacant grave, fling ourselves to the ground, or hide behind any protection that was available. As we paid our last tribute to our heroes, we would sometimes wonder when we too would join the ranks of those we were caring for; but somehow the good Lord seemed to guide us and direct us through all danger.

I shall never hear taps blown again, without a keen mental picture of the many farewells we gave to the brave young lads who gave their all for the greatest cause in the world—the love of their folks back home, and their country's freedom. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

The following poem was inspired by the acres of blood-red fields of poppies in North Africa where many a brave American gave his life's blood for his country. It was composed while the Chaplain was a patient in the hospital overseas near Rabat.

### POPPIES

Poppies, poppies, red fields everywhere.  
A symbol that meant not despair,  
But that youth was answering  
The challenge for loved ones fair.

Poppies, poppies, beautiful poppies,  
With their color of bright red,  
That seemed to stand out in marveled splendor  
As a tribute to our soldier dead.

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

Poppies, poppies, whether in Flanders Field,  
North Africa, Aleutians, Philippines, or where,  
All these poppies, as silent witnesses  
Of the blood of our youth which was spilt there.

Poppies, poppies, when we see them,  
Let us breathe a prayer,  
That wherever our dead be over there,  
That God will watch over them.

Let us not despair,  
For they have not died in vain,  
But that peace on earth might again  
Forever fill the air.

H. P. ABBOTT,  
Major, Chaplain.

## *Chapter Nine*

### *War Makes Christians*

On the boat, prior to the Invasion, during the Protestant services, approximately four hundred men made decisions for Christ. For many of them it was the first time in their lives to make any profession of religion. Upon other occasions, it would be my privilege to have as many as eighty in a group, consisting of two or three companies, make this profession. Every day more soldiers in my regiment looked to God, according to the dictates of their own conscience, for encouragement, hope, enlightenment, protection, and peace. As I looked into the faces of the men of my army congregation, I could see those who never attended chapel in the States, who had never prayed or read their Bibles, or attended church in civilian life, taking on a sudden keen interest in the things they had so long neglected. I never had to want for good attention; this should, in itself, convince those who desire to know whether in wartimes soldiers turn to, or away from, religion.

Love, duty, and fear, sometimes call these men to worship. During combat it usually is fear. Few men can help being "casualty conscious", once they have been in action and have seen the devastating effects of high explosives and realize for the first time in their lives how thin the thread of life really is. Recklessness soon disappears from the actions of experienced and seasoned men, and

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only fools or saints are not afraid before going into battle.

Our men do not like to kill, because of their education, their religious training, and lofty ideals; and no man, in his right sense, enjoys or relishes it. One sergeant said to me, "As I drove my tank up, prior to mowing them down, with their eyes showing a look of wild horror, and their pitiful cries for mercy, I could not mow them down. Instead, I gave the order for them to toss their weapons on the ground and, after having one of my men search them, I ordered them toward the American lines." Most soldiers adopt the attitude that they have a job to do, and the sooner they get it done, the sooner they can get back home and resume their normal American way of living. One lieutenant who had been in a very hot spot, with artillery sharpnel raining all around his fox-hole, remarked, "That stuff sure makes a Christian out of a man, doesn't it?"

Man, in the face of danger, or death, turns to God because there is no other place to go. God is his only hope of safety; every other means of protection has proved entirely inadequate. No, I do not believe that our men in the European Theatre cherished hatred in their hearts, except in those cases where they have seen their own buddies killed at the hands of the enemy. This situation, of course, did not apply, I am told, toward the Japs, who apparently had no sense of decency or respect for the Geneva convention rules, or for the rules of civilization and humanity.

## WAR MAKES CHRISTIANS

I have met some soldiers that seem to be indifferent toward human life. Theirs was only a grim determination to conquer the enemy regardless of the cost—they asked no quarter and gave none. They were consumed with a desire to even accounts by exterminating their enemys. But this type of man was the exception.

It is interesting to note that modern warfare is different from that of previous wars, in that most killing is done at long ranges. A shell sails through the air, and men are killed some six or seven miles away. The man who fired the artillery piece did not even see them, for a forward observer directed the firing. The same thing applies to bombing by an air force, and shell fire by the navy. Only a small percentage of our soldiers, mostly in the infantry, pulled the trigger and saw a man crumple up. I have watched artillery fire and have seen it reach its mark. I have watched tank battles and have seen tanks maneuver to prevent their being struck by enemy shells. All knew that some men were being killed and wounded in most of the actions, and they wished that this was not necessary; but since it was, they derived satisfaction from the realization that they helped to protect one another, and to hasten the climax of the war, thus saving men on both sides.

To me, personally, it was always a pleasure to see a group of enemy prisoners being marched to the rear, in my sector, as I often explained to my colleagues, "Thank the Lord there are some that I won't have to bury." I know of no meaner or

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more disagreeable task than to have to bury some enemy soldier who had been dead for several hours or days, whose body, because of the battle conditions, could not be retrieved for burial sooner. At the end of day, after the sight and touch of bloody uniforms, we did not feel much like eating.

The question may be asked, "Does killing in war tend to destroy man's morals and finer qualities?" From questions that I have asked men in my outfit I am convinced, for the most part, it will not transform them into gangsters, or make any material difference in them or their actions. Some are convinced, as I am, that they will live better lives in the future than they have in the past. Some think they will conduct themselves after the war much as they did before. They killed in defense of their country, and for a righteous cause, just as a law enforcement officer might take human life in his efforts to safeguard society and protect others from the hardened criminal.

War sees men at their best, and at their worst: as little children, as grown-up men, as heroes and cowards, with ability to forgive and desire for revenge, with joys and sorrows amongst them. During combat, hardly a day passes without some outstanding soulsearing experience that the average person will never witness; and what effect war has on soldiers will depend upon the individual and upon those who influence them after they return home. Some, during battle conditions appear at first weak, later are decorated for out-





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The dependence of these men on God has comforted them in sorrow, guided them in danger, sheltered them from destruction and harm, and helped them to find themselves. Of course, it may be said that the mental and moral casualties of war, due to shattered nerves, dissolutionment, and other conditions, will need much help from the various humanitarian agencies following the war to restore them to their proper places. Their state of mind is not incurable, but adjustments will have to be made. The army chaplains, doctors, and the spiritually and mentally strong, do their part to assist them; but after they are out of the army it will be necessary that their loved ones, together with patriotic citizens, help them to overcome their hardness, their cynicism, and their bitterness, by instilling in them new courage, increased faith, and a deeper understanding.

A definite challenge faces the churches now. These men must be reached within ninety days after their return to civilian life, or they will be lost to the church's program. Ministers, priests, and rabbis, should make a study of the soldiers' needs and plan such programs that can be immediately expanded to meet the needs when they arise. The churches must not fail. They cannot afford to fail, for the period immediately following the war will be a testing period for the churches, during which time they will prove their proper place or they will be avoided by the veterans. A program, with adjustments and concessions should be set up to help the men.

## *Chapter Ten*

### *The War in North Africa is Over*

I never again expect to see such a sight as that which greeted us upon the capitulation of the German forces in North Africa. Even during the memorial services held in the cemetery at Mateur, the roads were filled with prisoners of war going into stockades. We had the feeling that our American heroes buried in North Africa had not died in vain. There were so many prisoners that hundreds were unguarded as they themselves drove their vehicles, loaded beyond capacity, into the prison stockades. Some bore expressions of relief that it was over for them, others were smiling, and some were singing. Here and there Americans, who just a short time before were mixing in dreadful combat to the death with them, were now tossing cigarettes to them, in return receiving smiles that expressed appreciation. While some of them wore expressions which were sullen and still arrogant, others expressed themselves to the effect that Hitler would be defeated in the end. Many, however, were so full of German propaganda that they still refused to believe that their country's defeat was impending and inevitable.

We were all assembled before Major General Ernest N. Harmon and informed that we were due a rest, and that we would go to a place near a large city where we could rest and get our equipment ready for continued operations. This proved

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to be thirteen hundred miles away and it took several days to reach our destination by convoy. The chaplain dropped out along the way and visited patients of his regiment and others in the various hospitals, and in many instances located men whose names had been carried "missing in action," since their whereabouts were unknown. It was during these visits that the chaplain visited Brigadier General Robinett, Major Cook, and other officers, in a hospital in Algiers. All of them seemed pleased to see and talk with their chaplain.

Finally, we reached a nice bivouac area, and settled down to housekeeping once more. Colonel H. H. Howze was then commanding the regiment for Brigadier General Robinett and Colonel Chauncey Benson, had returned to the United States. The former, at this writing, is Commandant of the Armored School at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where his experiences especially fit him for preparing men for our armored units. The latter is serving in another battle area. The usual diseases, such as come to G. I's, known as dysentery, malaria, and other minor ailments, together with relaxing from months of tension and exposure forced some to enter the hospital.

On June 8, 1943, I was admitted to a Station Hospital and later to a General Hospital near Rabat, North Africa, where I was confined two months, suffering from exhaustion and serious illness due to combat conditions. Later, because of the seriousness of my illness, I was evacuated to the United States, finally arriving at the Army

## THE WAR IN NORTH AFRICA IS OVER

and Navy General Hospital, Hot Springs, Arkansas, which was under the command of Brigadier General Goldthwaite. My Ward Surgeon was Lieutenant Colonel Ashton, who, strangely enough, was a classmate of Major Nelson, who had been my Ward Surgeon in the hospital in North Africa. In the six hospitals where I was a patient, the treatment and care were marvelous. The nurses were "angels," and the medical officers were efficient and considerate. With such fine treatment, I was finally released and ordered to New Orleans, Louisiana, where I was assigned as Director of a Chaplains' School, established there for those chaplains who were preparing for overseas duty, and under the direct supervision of Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Gale Cleland. Following the establishment of this school in which Chaplains Majors Mitchell and Arnold were co-instructors, Chaplain Hugh Mitchell and I were ordered to the Chaplain School, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, to take a course under the direction of Colonel William Cleary. This course was required by the War Department for all chaplains. Following the completion of this course I returned to New Orleans and was ordered, at the request of Brigadier General P. M. Robinett, by the War Department to go to Fort Knox, Kentucky, as chaplain, at The Armored School. I have since learned that many of the armored men who returned from overseas were placed in positions in this school where their experiences best fitted

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them to help others who were preparing to take up the torch and carry on the war.

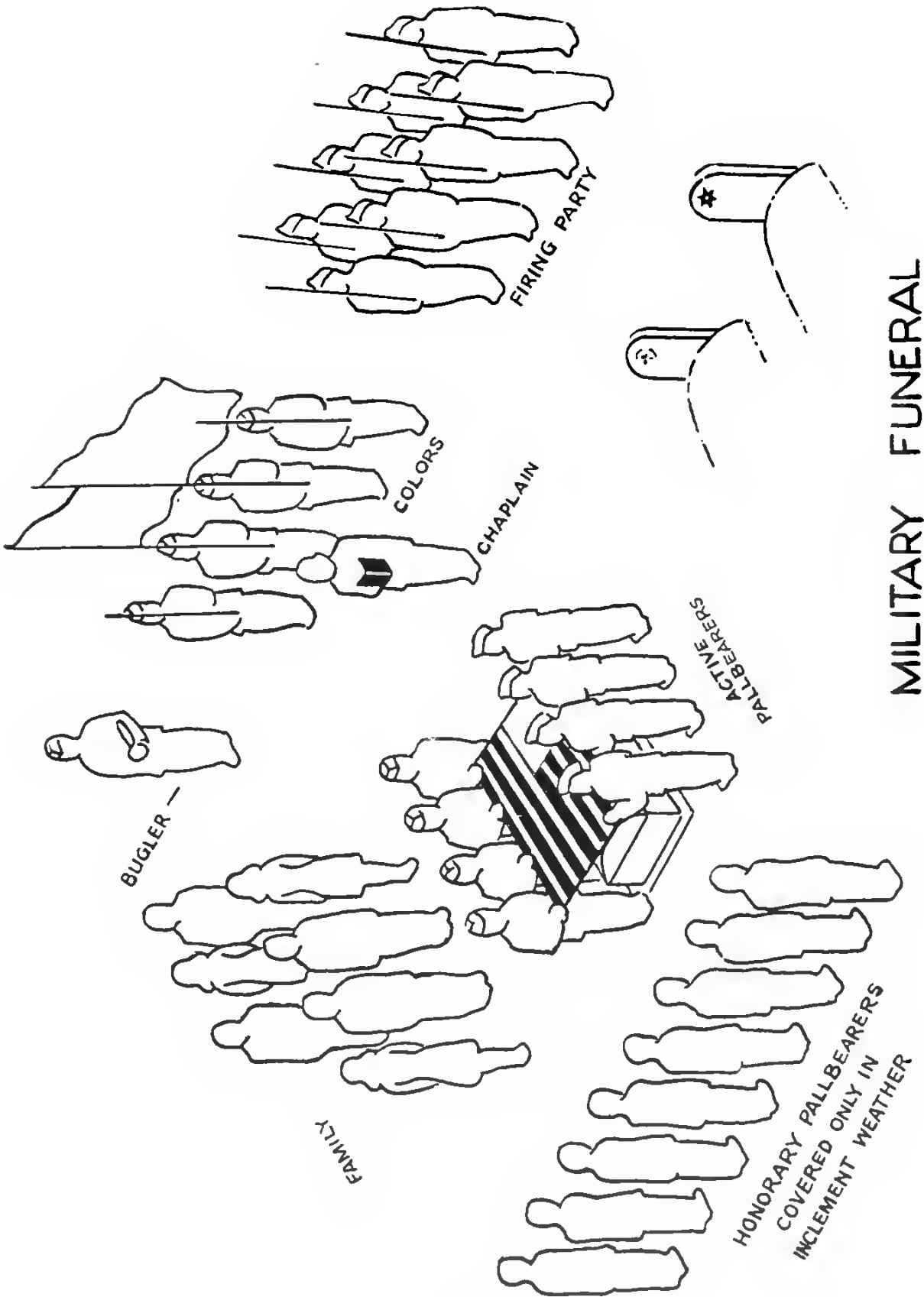
At this writing I am on leave, and I find many desiring my services. All are interested in the welfare of our fighting forces. I would not be honest unless I said that, "War changes things, and war changes us." It is good to be back, sleep in a real bed, drink cold sweet milk, eat ice cream, drink cold Coca Colas, and speak in one's native tongue without fear of being misunderstood, as well as get a southern fried chicken dinner now and then, and to renew acquaintances with loved ones and friends.

In the midst of this "Heaven on Earth" I did not forget that our buddies were still in Italy. I remembered them in my prayers, and prayed for an early victory that they all might be able to return to the land they love, and in which they left their loved ones. May God bless them and our troops of all services on all fronts, men and women everywhere who have joined together with those who have given of their means to hasten the day when the weapons of warfare shall be turned into plowshares, and war shall be no more, and "Peace on Earth and Good Will Toward all Men" will again prevail.

## THE CHAPLAINS MARCH ON

We are now at a forward hospital. Men have been in contact with the enemy the day before, today they come streaming in, Americans, British, and Germans, most of them being Germans from

# MILITARY FUNERAL





**Chaplain Harry P. Abbott at his desk, Fort Knox  
Armored School, following service overseas,  
counseling with one of his men**



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the Tenth Panzer Division. The chaplain and his assistant, T-5 Henry Whipple, move about from bed to bed with a word of cheer, a bit of news from the front, passing out chewing gum, candy, and writing paper to all (including the enemy.) It is indeed a ghastly experience to see men with an eye out, an arm off, a leg severed, a body horribly burned, or a hole in the throat or head, and yet not showing the intensity of their suffering. One day as I was making my usual rounds of the hospital, I glanced around and saw my assistant sitting square in the middle of the floor in one of the wards. I said to him, "Corporal Whipple, what is the matter?" and he replied, "I just can't take it." I could readily understand, as it was difficult for me.

One soldier's face had been burned in a tank which had been hit, and as he puffed, the smoke came out of a hole in his neck made by a 50-caliber shell; he had other injuries as well, but lived about three months. He would always try to smile when the chaplain was around, and when I asked him if everything was all right with him and his Maker he replied in the affirmative, and stated that he knew he was going to die.

A German soldier was lying deathly pale on a hospital cot and, as I approached him and gave him some writing paper, gum, and candy, the tears trickled down his cheeks. He grasped my hand, gave me a look of appreciation, and informed me in German, part of which I understood, that he had been shot in the lung and did not expect to

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recover. He sobbed as though his heart would break, out of gratitude for the fact that I took time out to show a bit of kindness to him, an enemy.

We then proceeded in the dark over the mountains and through the rain to our next destination.

It was my firm belief that American soldiers were becoming more religious—especially was this true as they moved nearer the front line—and I could almost determine when talking with a soldier, by his attitude toward religion, how close he has been to the enemy. The Chief of Chaplains' office, under Chaplain (Major-General) William Arnold, produced statistics that show that men in the armed services attended church services in greater numbers than ever, trying to find the spiritual comfort they seek. Every effort was made for the comfort and convenience of the men at home and overseas, as far as was practical, in attending divine service.

Every time we would stop, men would start digging a foxhole, no matter what time of day or night they reached the area. One lad was very much occupied in reading when an officer came along and inquired as to what he was reading. He replied, "The Bible, Sir." The officer turned and walked quietly away, and I am sure in years to come this officer will picture this soldier in his foxhole, on foreign soil, reading the Book of Life. No Pin-Ups, beer bottles, or obscene magazine in the hands of that soldier would have caused that officer to be concerned, but when a soldier turns his olive grove into a temple of God he feels as

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though he stands on holy ground. Yes, it takes "Blood and Guts" to win a war, but it takes something far more important than that, and that is faith in God, and the courage that only faith in Him can inspire. Most of our soldiers had the abiding faith that helped them see through every crisis and which gave them courage to stand in the face of the enemy, and grace to die if it needs be.

Each wounded soldier receives a Purple Heart decoration and the ones who give their lives in battle are awaiting this decoration posthumously. Some men treated themselves for slight injuries rather than cause concern at home, which undoubtedly would have followed an official casualty notice. They wanted to spare the folks at home any anxiety.

Sometimes the dust would be so heavy on the roads that the vehicles in front could not be seen. All windshields were down, a security measure enforced, for the glare of the sun would immediately enable an enemy plane to spot the vehicles. The tops had to be down in order to allow all-round vision, because often planes would skip over the hills in the rear of the vehicles, and, before one could escape, would subject the occupants to machine gun fire.

It may well be said for Combat Command "B" that, from the time of D-Day on November 8, 1942 until the conclusion of the campaign at Tunisia, and the surrender of the enemy in North Africa, there never was a "dull moment." Men died on the battlefields of Italy, France, the Solo-

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mons, and everywhere, where bases were situated, for the four freedoms are specifically guaranteed to us by the constitution of the United States: freedom of speech and freedom of religion; to these have been added freedom from want and freedom from fear. The present war has been fought through to complete victory, regardless of the cost and the suffering, because this war was to assure these four freedoms for the future.

The combatant soldier knows, as well as those assisting him, that Sherman was right, when he said, "War is Hell." Woodrow Wilson said, "Only free people can hold their purpose and their honor steady to a common end, and prefer the interest of mankind to any narrow interest of their own." It is for this freedom that our men on all fronts, on land, on sea, in air, in the factories, at home, men and women alike, have fought and worked.

I was impressed by the ability of Americans to carry out their mission through hardships and danger and retain their sense of humor, adaptability, generosity, coolness in emergencies, and their religious fortitude.

The American soldier seems to take his job with seriousness; he refuses to take himself into consideration, however serious the job may be. He is not conceited but he knows the effectiveness of his skill and his weapons; and, while he is religious, he does not wear his religion on his coat sleeve, nor is it a mere Sunday religion. His religion for the most part is a deep sincere, unselfish, practical religion, and is evidenced even in the

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sharing of his chewing gum and candy with the natives, or with those who he thinks have less than he.

Upon one occasion, during the gruesome task in which we were engaged, one soldier solemnly proclaimed, "I hate war," to which another responded immediately, "Eleanor hates war;" still another said, "Jimmie hates war;" all the rest replied, "We all hate war." Those men were in the best position to know what it was all about—just a bit of serious humor unwittingly injected at a time when their spirits were low.

In the stress of combat we often learn more truly what our young men are made of. Poetry has come out of this war—poetry written by boys whose English teachers back home never thought of as poets.

During the invasion, this poem was found on the body of an American soldier by Petty Officer 2d Class Edward L. Fike, who sent it to his mother, Mrs. J. H. Martin, 34 LaSalle Place, Louisville, Ky.

### LOOK, GOD!

Look God, I have never spoken to You  
But now I want to today—How do You do?  
You see, God, they told me You didn't exist  
And like a fool I believed all this.

Last night from a shell hole I saw Your sky,  
I figured right then they had told me a lie.  
Had I taken time to see things You made  
I'd have known they weren't calling a spade a  
spade.

## THE NAZI "88" MADE BELIEVERS

I wonder, God, if You'd shake my hand,  
Somehow I feel You will understand.  
Funny I had to come to this hellish place,  
Before I had time to see Your face.

Well, I guess there isn't much more today,  
But I'm glad God, I met You today.  
I guess the Zero Hour will soon be here,  
But I'm not afraid since I know You are near.

The signal! well, God, I'll have to go,  
I like You lots and I want You to know.  
Look now, this will be a horrible fight,  
Who knows, I may come to Your House tonight.

Though I wasn't friendly to You before,  
I wonder, God, if You'd wait at Your Door.  
Look, I'm crying, me, shedding tears,  
I wish I had known You these many years.

Well, I have to go now, God, goodbye,  
Strange, since I met You I'm not afraid to die.

Robert Ingersoll wrote:

"A little while ago I stood by the grave of the old Napoleon—A magnificent tomb of gilt and gold, fit almost for a dead deity, and gazed upon the sarcophagus of black marble, where rest at last the ashes of that restless man. I leaned over the balustrade, and thought about the career of the greatest soldier of the modern world. I saw him at Toulon; I saw him putting down the mob in the streets of Paris; I saw him at the head of the army in Italy; I saw him crossing the bridge of Lode,

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with the Tricolor in his hand; I saw him in Egypt, in the shadows of the Pyramids; I saw him at Marengo, at Ulm, and at Austerlitz; I saw him in Russia, where the infantry of the snow and the cavalry of the wild blast scattered his legion like winter's withered leaves; I saw him at Leipsic, in defeat and disaster driven by a million bayonets back upon Paris, clutched like a wild beast, banished to Elba. I saw him escape and retake an empire by the force of his genius. I saw him upon the frightful field of Waterloo, where chance and fate combined to wreck the fortunes of their former king. And I saw him at St. Helena, with his hands crossed behind him, gazing out upon the sad and solemn sea. I thought of the orphans and widows he had made, of the tears that had been shed for this glory, and of the only woman who had ever loved him, pushed from his heart by the cold hand of ambition. And I said, I would rather have been a French peasant, and worn wooden shoes; I would rather have lived in a hut, with a vine growing over the door and the grapes growing purple in the kisses of the autumn sun; I would rather have been that poor peasant, with my loving wife by my side, knitting as the day died out of the sky, with my children upon my knees and their arms about me; I would rather have been that man, and gone down to the tongueless silence of the dreamless dust, than to have been that imperial impersonation of force and murder, known as Napoleon the Great."

## *Chapter Eleven*

### *Victory and Peace*

The First Armored Division, together with many other units following the capitulation of Sicily, and after strenuous fighting with severe losses at Casino and Anzio, finally achieved victory. Captain Serex, a friend, gave his life on the last day of hostilities in Italy. I had officiated at his wedding before he left the United States. Also my friend, Major Blodgett, while in Italy, was struck in the chest but was only knocked to the ground unharmed. Two days later he was hit by a shell and killed.

Chaplain John Carper, my colleague in action, remained with the men until he was evacuated to the United States, and later served with me at the Armored School, Fort Knox, Kentucky, until his discharge.

Yes, the going was tough for many. We picked up bodies burned to a crisp, from tanks and planes. We buried the dead, even our enemy, but not always under pleasant circumstances. With all of the experiences that we had, with suffering on every hand, as a result of war, we wondered, "Isn't there some other way than taking the flower of the world's youth and manhood? Why couldn't nations see the folly of war?" In a supposedly educated world, war brings out the savagery in man, and is a means to an end—but what end? Our men went to war not with hate in their



## VICTORY AND PEACE

hearts (except in isolated instances) but rather with the purpose of making possible the continuation of our "Four Freedoms," and the preservation of all those things which are dear to civilization, including our loved ones at home.

In order to achieve this victory and preserve these ideals, it was necessary to dispose of such leaders as Mussolini and Hitler. It seems almost paradoxical that Hitler's world conquest plans as outlined in his mind, and as pictured in his book, "Mein Kampf," parallel that picture described by Robert Ingersoll concerning Napoleon, with the exception that the practices of Hitler in his mass murders as publicized, and his destruction of Lidice, as well as his brutal gestapo methods, were far more bestial than those of Napoleon. A mind must be completely distorted to conceive of some of the crimes that the "paper-hanging" corporal and his stooges were responsible for. One cannot set himself up in the place of God and expect anything less than defeat and retribution. With the accepted fact of the death of Mussolini and supposed irrefutable fact of Hitler's death, together with the climax in the atomic bomb which brought about a quick capitulation on the part of the Japanese, thereby no doubt saving thousands of additional American lives, it is obvious that, as in the days of Joshua, when the Lord granted a speedy victory in obedience to his orders, that it was in God's plan to bring about an end to the suffering of the world by the revelation of this new power to men and

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nations that would use it and control it in the proper ways.

### THE RETURNING VETERAN

The unexpected end of hostilities and the resultant release of millions of our armed forces has brought about many problems which were not previously solved. With the widest imagination conceivable by the ordinary military layman, it was thought that the war would last at least six months longer than it did. However, everyone rejoices at the fact that sufferings, death, and heartaches are no longer caused by the war. The churches now have the greatest challenge they have faced in their history. Many of the men returning will take up their various places in civilian life. They may seem indifferent for a while and they may seem changed, for men cannot be suddenly taken out of a world of strife, bombed buildings, fox-holes, noise and confusion of battle, the smell of death, and fire, and be completely re-oriented in a few days. It takes months to do this, for the emotional strain is so great that it has had no opportunity for outlet.

Some of these men may seem to be just the opposite from what they were before they went overseas. Some of them may want to be to themselves. Some of them may not want to be where the crowd is—they may want to be left among their thoughts, and yet with patience, with consideration, and with the proper kind of encouragement, these men will again accept their normal

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places in the community, and overcome some of these seemingly peculiarities.

It is suggested that ministers organize a group of veterans and try to interest their "buddies" in the church activities insofar as possible. It is further suggested that returning veterans be given active places on church boards, in the Sunday schools, in the choirs, and in any other places of responsibility, in order that they might feel more a part of their home environment and community. Recognize them as the heroes they are, but do not ask them or press them for experiences. Wait on their own initiative. Do not sympathize with them. Treat them as you would any other member of the community. By church letters, through visits, and by working through committees composed of veterans, you will gradually see these men fulfill their own desires and ambitions.

I have heard hundreds of men, who have never taken an active interest in churches, profess that they were going to do so after a rest following their return to their homes. One soldier said he wasn't going to send his little boy to Sunday school, he was going to take him! One wife said that her husband seemed restless and did not seem interested in church activities. Upon questioning, I found that he had been back in the United States for only a few weeks. I suggested that she exercise patience and give him a few months, with encouragement, and eventually through the aid of some of their friends he would find his place and no doubt resume his church activities. I

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firmly believe that if a church makes proper planning, such as establishing Sunday-school classes for veterans, their wives, and sweethearts, with a recreational program not too vigorous, including banquets, dramatics, and games of the proper type, that the church can and will become the social center for the returning veteran, and will remain so even after the agencies such as the U.S.O. and similar organizations are no longer functioning. For a while, the veteran may appear self-conscious, and he may even be bitter; he may become disgusted with people in general and seem sullen and resentful, but do not think because of this that he is lost to the church and society, for this is not true. While he will seek such places as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and other similar organizations, where he can visit comrades in the service, he will gradually adjust himself and find his proper place. However, the church must be relentless in its efforts to show its interests, without waning, by every means possible, in the veteran. Many times pastors will be able to do small favors in helping the veteran to find employment or re-employment and helping him to adjust his marital relationships.

The other day a young soldier said to me, "Chaplain, I am sorry I came home." It surprised me because he was the first one I had heard make that statement. Most of the boys are eager to return to their homes. Upon inquiry, I discovered that when he returned home he found that his wife had given birth to a child not his own. He

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was very much upset. He expected to return overseas, but said that he was making every effort to have her allotment discontinued. A few days later, through a strange coincidence, I met his wife. She informed me that the child had died the next day after its birth and that the father of the child was in a hospital for the feeble-minded. She made the statement that she had made her mistake and was now paying for it. She still expressed her devotion to her husband. Upon being informed of this, he replied, "I was a sucker once; I don't expect to be again."

Another soldier came to me and informed me that he had sent a considerable amount of money home while overseas, and expected that he would have enough when he returned home so he and his wife could live comfortably for a short while at least, but on returning he found that his wife had not only dissipated the funds but had also sold the house and the car, and would not give an account of what happened to the money. Later, when he was not expected, he returned home late one evening and found his wife with a group of men and women she had invited, having a hilarious party. In this case, while the original intentions were to leave his wife forever, they finally became readjusted. However, there continued to be, for some time, mistrust and unbelief existing. While the writer is not intending to set up the soldier as superior in his actions to those of his wife and, while these instances are only isolated instances, yet there are far too many like them.

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The church must interest the veterans in order to give them the proper environment, and help them to avoid constantly courting domestic difficulties.

On the other hand, it might be well for me to state that there are organizations such as the one in existence in Elizabethtown, Kentucky where wives of overseas men (officers and enlisted men) gather together and find consolation and mutual interest among themselves in discussing their future plans, and in relating items of interest taken from the letters of their loved ones overseas. The writer had the privilege of speaking to this group and I have never seen a more loyal and select group of young women than these. No doubt this can be duplicated many times throughout the United States by various organizations of similar purpose. It is such as these who have made equally as great sacrifices as the veteran overseas (and deserve decorations.) They are the ones that will be satisfied to help their husbands find readjustments in the local community and can be depended upon to lead them in the direction of the churches while the men still have the hardships of the other world fresh in their memories.

The years that lie ahead will determine, to a large extent, the influence of the church upon the community and upon lives of the future generations. Just as the Nazi 88's made believers through causing men to pray to their Maker and get right with Him within their souls, so the churches can be a source of power in reminding

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them of their obligations to win the peace as they have won the war. While we have gained the victory, it will be necessary for us to work together in order to maintain it by carrying out the principles of the Beattitudes in our daily living. This we must do in order to achieve the purpose of the church in this day.

The building of a decent social order and the organization of the world for peace is something Christians are concerned about and rightly should be. Veterans can play an important part in this task. It is a time when rationalism, nationalism, and materialism are contending for the mastery of the world. It is also a time when new ideas impelled by new motives are changing people, and it is imperative for us to examine the basic plans of ethical religion and make sure they are practical. Certainly there can be no hope for a better world unless we can get at the source of fundamental truths and make them the center of our living. The church must take the lead in Christian education and rejuvenation. The churches must co-operate for the improvement of social life and Christian living. Veterans have learned in the army that men of all denominations and religions can live and work together, and worship in their own ways without compromising their principles, ideals, or training.

I noticed that wherever we were, whether in Ireland, England, Africa, or any other place, that many of our men sought out churches, wherever the opportunity afforded, that they might attend

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them. It is felt that these civilian contacts will no doubt have their influence on them in the future. It is my observation that many veterans who never before were religious will become religious. It is also my observation that men who were religious before they went into the army, for the most part, will be religious on their return, and that those who were totally indifferent to all phases of religious activities are in the great minority and will continue to be so.

Upon one occasion, the writer turned in at a hospital in North Africa and was given anesthetics while a couple of deep-rooted jaw teeth were extracted. As I was being helped to the peep which was to take me to the main part of the hospital, one of the nurses looked out the window and remarked, "That officer looks like he's drunk," to which two of the patients who were lying near enough to the window to see fortunately, replied, "Not him—that's our chaplain!" This is only mentioned to assure you that officers and men did defend their chaplain. They believed in him to such an extent that no one could make deprecating remarks without a reply. I will admit that I was a little groggy under the influence of anesthetics and perhaps not too steady. Those officers have returned and one of them, Captain Hamlin, is a Veterans Administrative official in Louisville, Kentucky, at this time. I found that not only the enlisted men but the officers as well appreciated the opportunity to visit with the chap-



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lain, and many times would confide in him their innermost secrets and plans.

Many of the members of the First Armored Division and the First Infantry Division (as can be said of many other divisions) will never return. Those that remain, out of a debt of gratitude and the kinship existing between them as comrades, will carry on the torch and take their rightful places in the community, if given proper encouragement by those in position to do so. I say that when men can face death, when men can attend religious services with the rain beating down upon them through no compulsion, when men in fox-holes read their New Testaments of their own free will, when men overseas request from military authorities services to be held in areas, as I have seen them do, then I have no qualms for the future as far as the church is concerned, or the spiritual life of America; providing the churches meet the challenge that is set before them. The church that meets this challenge will succeed. The church that does not will soon lose its grip and cannot hope to achieve its rightful place in the leadership of the community.

Yes, the soldier had to contend with a lot of things, as did the chaplain, with which he would not have to contend under ordinary circumstances, but because of his desire to serve his fellowmen, despite these undesirable elements, he carried on. As a result, today we have freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from fear, and freedom from want. We can continue to sing "the land of

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the free and the home of the brave." We can continue to live in a nation that is recognized as "a Christian nation." Even if our nation is not what we think it ought to be, we can dare do something to make it what we think it should be.

Overseas, we saw strange costumes, we heard strange languages, we observed strange customs, we learned of strange faiths, we found Christians in strange places, we saw men and women at strange skills and arts. We were in a different world, but now that we have returned, and are returning, we feel that we would not want to live under the environment of people in other lands. We feel that God has blessed us in giving us the victory and making possible our return to the land which we left, and for which many of our comrades died, and for which we also would have paid the supreme sacrifice, had it not been for the grace of God.

### MESSAGE TO SERVICEMEN AND SERVICEWOMEN

You have played a big part in winning this war! You have made your contributions just as the folks who supplied us with food, ammunition, and the necessities for carrying on a successful warfare did. If we return to our places in our home communities, let us not become indifferent, care-free, and unconcerned; but let us take our rightful places in the community, uniting with the various service organizations in order that we may meet our buddies, and talk over old times; let us unite with the church of our choice and endeavor

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to make our homes Christian wherein lies the future hope of America.

Many of you have traveled through the inky darkness of night with no light of any kind, not knowing what the next movement had in store for you, as has the writer. Many of you have seen your buddies go to their untimely end in making the supreme sacrifice; many of you have spent sleepless nights moving up to the front; many of you have lived a part of your lives in foreign lands and have dodged bombs and bullets and German "88s" as has the writer; many of you have gone without the luxury of a good meal, and have lived on C-rations and K-rations for weeks and even months; many of you have had to sleep in muddy open fields, in pup tents, or live in tanks or planes; many of you have traveled over the country-side of hostile nations, always pressing on, and when going the wrong way your hearts were made heavy, such as were ours at Kasserine and at other places; many of you have gone to almost the breaking point and have reached the stage where you felt that it didn't matter; and yet now we are returning to all the things that we dreamed of while we were overseas.

Let us keep our promises to Almighty God, let us show our appreciation to him and to our loved ones by making as rapid adjustments, as is humanly possible, by taking an active part in the church of our choice, and thus continue to contribute to the national betterment of our country which we have been willing to suffer so much for. Let us

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continue to keep our trust in our national leaders and use rightful and peaceful means of choosing proper leaders in our community and in our nation, thus achieving and maintaining the Four Freedoms.

Some of you have said that it was hard to lead the Christian life in the Army, but many say that it is hard to live it anywhere, but it can be done if you make up your mind to do it; if you will fall in line with the millions of Christian soldiers marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before. General MacArthur stated upon one occasion, "Throughout the history of mankind, symbols have exerted an impelling influence upon the lives of men. The cross and the flag are embodiments of our ideals and teach us not only how to live but how to die." So if you will put on the "whole armor of God," and be armed with hope, with the sense of duty, with prayer, and with the guidance of the light of the Cross, you will become invincible. These are the four anchors which will hold against any storm that might beset you. We have won the war; let us preserve the peace. May God bless you all and keep you steadfast. As we were hand in hand with our fellowmen in war, may we also be in peace."

THE END















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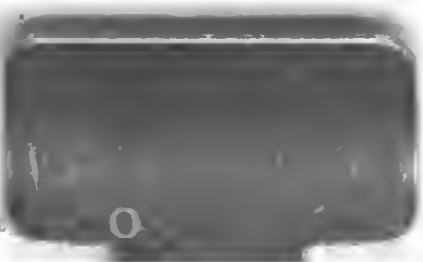
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